Sunday January 6, 2008 Vol. 33 / No. 29

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

AT THE END OF THE DAY The sun sets on the Philippines' Christmas season, which is, no ef, it not the world's longest. But expect no hopelessly Christmas-struck Filipinos to prolong their battles hauling and to linger around the manger until it's nearly Valentine's Day. So, the feast of the Sto. Niño and the feast of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo have happily become extensions of our celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Noli is admin's best bet

But opposition says he's no match for its 2010 candidate

By Norman Bordadora

THE OPPOSITION VIEWS VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO as the "most formidable" contender that the administration can field in the 2010 presidential election.

But even De Castro will be no match for anyone in the opposition's crop of "presidentiables," according to Zagunan de Dios Bulatao Rodriguez and lawyer Adel Tamano, both opposition stalwarts.

Rodriguez, former spokesperson of deposed President Joseph Estrada, the recognized leader of the opposition, made the fearless forecast at yesterday's Kapihan sa Sulo sessa Forum, saying: "My belief that our crop of 'presidentiables' can do better. As long as the opposition is not divided four or five ways, we will win."

Tamano, the spokesperson of the United Opposition, agreed that De Castro was the strongest candidate that the administration could put up against the likes of Senate President Manuel Villar of the Nacionalista Party (NP), Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II of the Liberal Party (LP), and Senators Loren Legarda and Panfilo Lacson.

"But he has De more built-in weaknesses than he is with the administration," Tamano pointed out.

Declared Rodriguez: "Vice President De Castro is the most formidable."

"But he is 'insulable' by a strong opposition. He is identified with the administration, and the administration trust rating is very low."

The administration coalition, led by the

HOLA 'Formidable but insulable'

UP passes torch: 100-yr-old to 6th grader

By Tarra Quismundo

A 100 YEAR-OLD ALUMNUS WILL LIGHT the first torch that will kick off the centennial celebration of the University of the Philippines on Tuesday evening.

Fernando Javier of Baguio City, the oldest known UP alumnus, will start a 100-torch relay at the UP academic oval in Diliman, Quezon City to open year-long activities marking the 100th year of the country's first public university.

Centennial activities also hope to raise P5 billion to improve the state university, created by an act of the Philippine legislature in 1908. From a modest block on Padre Faura Street in Manila, the university now has seven constituent universities on 12 campuses, with a student population of about 50,000.

Javier, who celebrated his 100th birthday last Dec. 22, graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering from UP Manila in

"BIGGER THAN FIRST QUARTER STORM," but without the politics.

Lucky date: Wedding frenzy on 08-08-08

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

WHEN CHILDHOOD SWEETHEARTS Paul Alvarez and Sara Mendonza decided to get married, they chose a most auspicious date—Aug. 8, 2008.

Unfortunately, so have many other optimistic couples.

This is the reason why although the date is still more than seven months away, and falls on a weekday at that, the calendars of some of the country's most popular churches for weddings have already been filled.

And since the Triple 8 combination—DOUBLE...call me lo running around for another century, it is believed that it will bring even more luck than

Stage set for RP as global healing center

By Bernardo V. Lopez

LAST CHRISTMAS EVE, TEE SECUR to guard at Montemaria in Batangas saw from afar a bright glow on the makeshift altar stage.

He thought the electricity had been installed. But then, he thought, why now in the middle of the night...on the eve of Christmas?

When he went over to check, the light was gone.

The guard sent a text message to...ring the incident to the Montefaro of the Mary Mother of the Poor Foundation (MMPF), which supports 91 Montemaria Sisters, the non-common healer of the blind, deaf, mute and lame.

Both Sisters and the MMPF wondered: Was this mysterious light, which came at the time of the birth of Jesus, perhaps an omen of His coming as this remote hillside?

Sisters and the foundation are feverishly preparing for a big event at Montemaria on Jan. 11-13, a visit that Sisters has named 'Healing the Nations by Prayer and Adoration'—deemed timely in this era of turmoil, economic decline and disasters.

They expect a huge crowd, perhaps the beginnings of the vision of a global healing center.

The logistics are extremely simple...a tent that can accommodate

Oil broker pays $600 for fame in $100 oil barrel

NEW YORK—WHAT PRICE FAME? AT the New York stock market, it's $600.

A local trader cut to win a \$60 Coke inside the purchase that took oil prices to the historic \$100 plateau last week but he lost \$600 on the deal, reports said.

The trader has been named by US and British media as Richard Ames who runs a one-man oil brokerage named ARS.

DI BROKER A2

The house on Vito Cruz: Family's heroic heritage to nation began here

By Luling H. Lim

(Ed's note: The author is the daughter of Gen. Vicente P. Lim and Pilar Hidalgo Lim.)

VITO CRUZ WILL ALWAYS BE VITO CRUZ to us although the street is now called Pablo Ocampo.

The name of the street has changed but hopefully, the house built by our parents, Gen. Vicente P. Lim and Pilar Hidalgo Lim, will remain.

The house on Vito Cruz became a home when Vicente, who was then an army major, Pilar and their four sons transferred there in 1951 from the municipal home of Pilar in Magdalena Street in Ermita, Manila.

My father was able to build the house on his salary since the lot was only 30 centavos a square meter. The grand sum of

THE HOUSE THAT WAS A HOME on Vito Cruz (now Pablo Ocampo Street) that Gen. Vicente Lim and Victoria Pilar Hidalgo Lim built for their family will stands. Their six children say that it was in this home that they were "taught to live loving God, each other, and our country ... It's families who pass on dignity of our nation."

JOB MARKET
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JOB INQUIRER

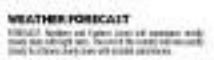
NEWS /A2
Suspected NPAs file on Angara security detail in Aurora province; 1 hurt

ENTERTAINMENT /F1
Entertainment Yearender. The year of living scandalously from 'Greta expectations' to the Sunshine Cruz explosion over Cesar Montano's so-called Brazilian interlude.

TALK OF THE TOWN W12
2007 Heroes chosen by Asia News Network, an alliance of 16 newspapers, including PDI, published in 14 Asian cities

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST



Energy summit a 'futile exercise'

Solon, militants urge repeal of VAT, Oil Deregulation Law

WHAT'S INSIDE

HEED BUILDING moratorium on Boracay, or else, execs told /A5

WANTED Indonesians pay to avoid capture, says military /A7

PCSO SAYS lotto funds not going to Palace /A9

ANNULMENTS down last year, says Church /A9

ALL IS SET for Black Nazarene feast /A9

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Jovanie Aning and TJ Burgonio

AN OPPOSITION SENATOR AND MILITANT GROUPS YESterday dismissed on a "futile exercise" and "a waste of energy" the top-level energy summit called by President Macapagal-Arroyo in the face of skyrocketing oil prices in the world market.

"The summit will not accomplish anything other than to highlight the ignorance and incompetence of energy officials who need to call a summit just to find out what's going on," said Sen. Francis Escudero.

Rather than hold a summit, he urged the government to stop any scattering measures to avert an oil crisis.

These measures, Escudero said, should include Sen. Manuel Roxas II's proposal to suspend the imposition of the 12-percent expanded value-added tax on oil and other fuel products.

Even before world oil prices breached the $100 per barrel mark, Roxas had proposed the suspension of the VAT on oil products for six months to ease the impact of the surging oil prices.

But Roxas' proposal would require an amendment to the VAT law and would cost the government about P15 billion in foregone revenues for six months.

"We must review the oil deregulation law and study the following: Removing the VAT, lowering tariffs, interposing price ceilings and prohibiting price manipulation," Escudero said.

He told the Department of Energy should also rationally investigate and develop greater efforts to find alternative and indigenous sources of energy.

Militant groups also denied Escudero's view that Malacañang's energy summit could turn out to be waste of energy.

The umbrella group Bayan Alternatibong Mahalon was expected to attend the summit would be selective, since it was not keen on reconciling the basic issue of high oil prices.

Bayan said that with the price of oil breaching the $100 mark, there was a need to immediately repeal the Oil Deregulation Law "to protect the people and the economy" from unwarranted increases in domestic pump oil petroleum products.

In a statement, Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said the demands of the people were "simple": Stop oil price hikes by repealing the Oil Deregulation Law and scrap the 12-percent VAT imposed on petroleum products.

"Unless the so-called energy summit addresses these issues, can we really expect anything from this summit? The organizers will simply be wasting their energy," he pointed out.

The militant protesters' group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas yesterday said there was no need for the government to hold an energy summit.

"There is no need for it because the answer is very obvious. All administrations in recent years—oil prices and solution are the oil industry," KMP chair Rafael Mariano said.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Offshore Inspection Transport group Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) insisted there was no basis for the latest local oil price hike.

Piston secretary general George San Mateo said that local oil companies could not use the recorded price spike in the New York Mercantile Index to justify another local price increase since the Philippines did not rely on the index as the basis for determining local oil prices.

But an official of the Department of Energy allowed public fears of a fresh round of oil prices in view of the rise in world oil prices.

"The oil that we're buying isn't pegged at $100 per barrel. There's no reason for us to panic. Our price basis, which is much much lower by about $10 per barrel," Jeanida Mirandilla, director of the DOE's oil industry management bureau, told a press forum in Quezon City.

The $100-per-barrel was the price of a raw material for oil, and hence, could not be used as a basis by local oil companies to increase local prices, she said.

"If even this basis for consumption in the Philippines and processed before it's sold. That's why it can't be used as a basis by local oil companies to raise prices," she said.

New players keep discounts

By Abigail L. Ho

NOW OIL PLAYERS EASTERN Petroleum Corp. and United Petroleum Phil. are keeping their pump prices at their discounted rates, despite the rise in petroleum prices in the world market.

Both Eastern Petroleum and United slashed gasoline prices by P1 a liter and diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos a liter starting Dec. 26.

The discount was supposed to end on Dec. 31, but both oil firms decided to extend this to Jan. 6.

In separate announcements yesterday Eastern Petroleum and United said they would continue with the discounted fuel rates up to Jan. 13.

Eastern Petroleum also offered a P1.00-a-liter price reduction on diesel for public utility vehicles.

When the price discounts began the day after Christmas, oil refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. both offered the same pump price reductions "in selected competitive trading areas."

The country's two biggest oil firms, however, have not said whether they would match Eastern and United and extend their discounted rates by another nine days.

Eastern Petroleum chair and chief executive Fernando Martinez earlier said the recent spike in world oil prices would not prompt an immediate increase in domestic pump prices, so much so that Eastern could afford to extend its discounted pump prices.

Oil prices in the United States broke through the key psychological barrier of $100 a barrel for the first time last Thursday.

Although local oil firms base their pump prices on the Dubai crude and Mean of Platts Singapore benchmarks, price movements in other indices, such as the New York Mercantile and Mean Time International Petroleum, also affected rates in the two regional benchmarks.

According to Bob Fiani, the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude spiked to a January average of $98.22 a barrel from $63.45 a barrel in December.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore 10-ppm benchmark for refined petroleum products reached $100.74 a barrel in the first two days of January from the December average of $86.23 a barrel.

MOPS based diesel likewise surged to $112.74 a barrel as of Jan. 2, from $106.36 a barrel last month.

Suspected NPA rebels attack soldiers securing Angara route

By Tuesday Dreyas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—Suspected to be New People's Army rebels fired at Army soldiers guarding the route in Aurora province that Sen. Edgardo Angara was to take, police and military officials said yesterday.

Lt. Roberto Balcoran, commander of a company of the Army's 69th Infantry Battalion that secured the route for the senator, said the rebels opened fire after Angara's vehicle had passed through Barangay Dipaco in Dinalungan, Aurora, just after 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Balcoran said his men returned fire to repel the attackers.

One Army man wounded

He said a soldier driving an Army truck was hit by shards from the vehicle's shattered windshield.

Balcoran said no soldier was killed in the attack.

Reached through his mobile phone, Angara said he did not know there an ambush had taken place "because I was away from the area." He said he was on a boat when the incident happened.

Aliaa F. Pangcatanman, Angara's chief of staff, said the senator was attending his son Gregorio, Quezon, at the time of the attack.

Angara completed the distance between the ambush site and his home "like Manila and Tarlac," she said.

Dipaco is about 25 km from the Dinalungan town proper.

Angara said he did not believe he was the target of the attack but the soldiers.

Bad for investment

He said it would be bad for the province's reputation should it be even reported that public officials were the targets of armed attacks.

Both Balcoran and Senior Supt. Romeo Tuazo, Aurora police director, said the 69th Auroran contingent was likely behind the rebels.

Angara, a native of Aurora, said he could not say anything more about the incident, whether it was a failed ambush, "free me drowning the anger of the people."

He said he was in Dinalungan to open the Center for Coconut Production and Research, one of the agricultural projects he had initiated in his home province.

'Probe killing of labor leaders'

ASSEMBLYMAN RED CRISPIN BELTRAN HAS called on Congress to look into the killing and harassment of labor leaders in the country.

Beltran filed House Resolution 209 asking the House committees on civil, political and human rights and on labor and employment to investigate the predicament of trade union leaders, which he said was one of the most dangerous in the world.

RP numbers high

Beltran said the 2007 annual survey of trade union rights violations released by the International Trade Union Confederation showed that 10 of the total 144 cases of trade union killings worldwide happened in the Philippines.

Beltran said the ITUC also reported more than 800 cases of beatings and torture of trade unionists in the country.

"Labor leaders and activists in the Philippines are being killed, abducted and subjected to excessive force, harassment, intimidation and surveillance, particularly in Central Luzon," Beltran said in a statement.

The usual suspects

"These acts of rights violations against labor leaders and human rights advocates are allegedly perpetrated by elements of the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police, local police forces and private security forces," he said.

"Despite strong pressure from the labor sector, the Department of Labor and Employment has not acted on these violations," Beltran said. Alarcon Bordadora

Jalosjos back to old routine at Muntinlupa

By John M. Aurelio

CONVICTED RAPIST ROMEO Jalosjos woke up yesterday in the same, unsecured cell he occupied before the 2004 elections.

He arrived just before midnight on Friday in his old quarters, a cigar and familiar foe, in which he was announced after his flight to Zamboanga on Dec. 22.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had welcomed back Jalosjos and his return was like "a reunion of sorts."

"Many inmates are happy that he is back because Jalosjos is known to be [a]mong [a]mong [a]mong

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'Heed building moratorium on Boracay, or else ..'

By TJ Burgonio

BORACAY ISLAND

In Aklan continues to battle with the construction of vacation homes and hotels, and illegal structures into Aklan's tourist playground.

Mirasol has assured local government officials they must embrace the moratorium on the construction of structures on the "over-loaded" island or face administrative sanctions.

He singled out Malay town Mayor Glenn Casabog for ignoring the two-storey limit imposed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in August last year and a three-hotel limit passed by the municipal council backing the move.

"It is so disappointment, he (Casabog) has not heeded our advice," Mirasol said in a phone interview. "With his election, he should be reminded of the dire consequences of not taking care of the environment."

Months after the moratorium was issued, the construction of "big houses," true and small hotels continued even in forested areas on the island, the secretary said.

"Boracay can't handle additional construction without unraveling the precious natural welfare of the island. It's overload-ed," Mirasol said.

Proof of this, he said, was the flooding of some business establishments on the island after a heavy rain last month.

Mirasol imposed the moratorium barring unconcerned development on Boracay shortly after he took the helm at the DENR on Aug. 1, 2007.

The Malay town council then passed a resolution stopping further construction on the island.

Both the Department of Tourism and Philippine Tourism Authority backed the moratorium, saying some resort owners had violated laws on construction, sanitation, health and environment.

Mirasol said the DENR would clash a "strongly worded" letter to the mayor to remind him of his job to protect the island and enforce the moratorium, as well as the penalties he faces if he fails to carry this out.

Benguet hopes clime, mountains will lure tourists

By Delmar Cortez
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—LOCAL GOVT. chiefs are pushing the province's cool climate and mountains for trekking as a major summer lure come the year.

Claire Perdencio, provincial tourism officer, said the province's mountains attracted numerous tourists, particularly nature lovers, last year.

The most visited sites, she said, were Mt. Pulag in Kabayan town (9,600 feet above level), Mt. Ugo in Itogon (6,400 feet) and Mt. Kabayan in Tuba (7,500 feet).

Perdencio said the policy of involving indigenous communities in local tourism ventures helped sell the province's natural wonders.

Three targets

The programs to be mapped out for this year by the province's tourism council will be in line with the three declared tourism targets of the Department of Tourism in the Cordillera, she said.

These are an increase in domestic and international tourist arrivals, investments and job opportunities in tourism-related ventures, and the improvement of tourism services that include visitors' safety and satisfaction.

The DOT said the success of this year's tourism projects would depend on how strong the lobby would be for the support of nongovernment organizations and local governments.

"This would be in terms of improved access to and from destinations, construction of clean restrooms in major tourist spots, and putting up of standardized directional signs on major tourism highways," a DOT brochure said.

Perdencio said tourists in the region had always been unique in one aspect—there has had to be a balance between tourism as a business and respect for the cultural environment.

Slight dip in arrivals

"This is because tourists have to combine the combination of culture as a tourist destination and indigenous communities pushing for the preservation of their natural resources," she said.

She said the local tourism office had been organizing barangay tourism councils that would enhance the social acceptability of tourism ventures.

"It is the tourists' experience with the community that would spell the difference," she said.

The DOT reported a slight dip in the number of tourist arrivals in the region for the first quarter of 2007 (250,970) compared to the same period in 2006 (240,286).

Benguet showed the same trend for the third quarter of last year (178,880) compared to the same period in 2006 (184,856).

Perdencio said the slight drop in tourist arrivals for the province could be attributed to the rainy and planting seasons that made tourist sites less attractive.

UP passes torch from 100-yr-old to 6th grader

From page B1

1111. "He's the jokster] once we were able to discover. He's up and about, still strong and he's excited about it. We will arrange for somebody to stand behind him during the 'torch relay'" said Paulmino Abreo Jr., president of the UP Alumni Association.

UPAA came to know about Javier when he paid a "courtesy call" on UP president Emerlinda Roman earlier as event chair of the 1st of UP's engineering alumni.

Torchbearers

He was immediately drafted into the list of ceremonial torchbearers, a roster that includes members of the Board of Regents, past UP presidents and representatives of the seven UP units—Diliman, Manila, Baguio, Los Baños, Visayas, Mindanao and the Open University.

Javier's idea is the first torch-bearer will light the second torch. Then the two of them will go to the third torchbearer, so that there will be more flames after each pass," Rivera told the Inquirer in an interview on Friday.

The 99th torchbearer will be the youngest one. He is Michael Reuben Dumlao, a sixth grader from the UP Integrated School chosen for his strong academic showing.

Dumlao, the university's first woman president, will carry the 100th torch and will light the ceremonial cauldron in front of the UP Oblation—the university's signature monument representing education and freedom.

"It's a sense of the young passing on to the old," said Rivera.

108 trees

The Rama, Rivera said, symbolizes the "knowledge and inspiration" that each UP graduate receives from the university.

At the same time, 100 trees around UP-Diliman's beautiful academic oval will be lit.

"We want to make it as impressive as possible, and start the ceremonial with a big bang," Rivera said.

"It's going to be bigger than the Feast Quadrennial," Rivera said in jest, referring to the movement of student activists, many from UP, that started the series of protests against President Ferdinand Marcos in January 1970.

No politics

And while UP events always set both ends of the political spectrum, Rivera said the centennial would veer away from politics.

"We're avoiding politicization. We don't want to give it any color ... We might be accused of something else ... There should be no political color," said Rivera. Exempt are UP officials who happen to be in politics, including former UP president Jose Dalupan Jr., the chair of the UP Centennial Commission, and members of the UP Board of Regents, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, Rep. Cynthia Villar and Bonnie Tiu, chief of the Commission on Higher Education.

Expected to gather some 5,000 alumni, students and faculty from the entire UP System, Tuesday's kickoff will begin with a Mass and morning program of UP's birthplace on Padre Faura, Manila.

From the Manila campus, contingents from different UP campuses will stage a motorcade to Diliman between 1 and 4 p.m.

Dragon dancers and an ati-atihan parade will greet the motorcade on University Avenue.

From a plane borrowed from the Philippine Air Force, sky divers representing the seven UP units will parachute onto a vacant lot in front of Florida Hall, a short distance from the Oblation. "The last skydiver will land in the area carrying a banner 'UP: Ang Galing Mo!'"

Ten cymbali (bursa) will sound off, like a call to order. At the same time, a hundred seconds (bells) will be lit, Rivera said. This will signal the start of the ceremonial flame relay.

Free concert

After the torch lighting, UP band artists, including Bom Cayabyab and the UP Madrigal Singers, among other people, will stage a free concert at the amphitheater behind UP's Quezon Hall, Rivera said.

The UP Alumni Association has celebrated several centennial-memorable homers, reheated dishes and commemorative stamps around the seven UP units for the coming 12 months.

"The Centennial Commission is raising the P5 billion for the improvement of facilities, improvement of salaries of teachers, improvement of academic programs through donations that we can gather," Rivera said.

Tuesday's event would be separately funded, with the commission raising at least P1 million through donations and the UP System contributing P500,000 to the launch festivities, Rivera said.

FOR THE DEVOTEES. All roads lead to Quiapo on Jan. 9, the feast of the Black Nazarene when Quiapo nearly turns into a sea of humanity, each one trying to reach and touch anclent, holy image. Each one in turn prays to his numbering the undering mercies of the Jesus, the Nazarene. Preparations for the feast are in full swing. (Story on Page A9.)

From page A1

about 40 people when these sands are reported to come. Pilgrims will have to bring their own food and beddings, and sleep under the stars.

Soares is praying for good weather. He says the text is "biblical," reminiscent of that used in the desert when the Israelites wandered to the Holy Land from Egypt.

Strange omens

Before the Christmas Eve gloo, there had been many strange omens at Montemaria—earth, wind, water, and even the apparitional elements of our planet.

Now, the wind omens: During the groundbreaking and blessing of the altar cauge in January 2007, just as Soares was beginning his homily, the cabin was shaken by a violent wind.

When others, including a bishop, spoke, everything became calm once more.

Second, the water omen: Just as Soares began sprinkling holy water on the altar cauge, an unexpected downpour of rain suddenly descended on the 500-odd people attending the ceremony. It was as if the heavens were joining him in blessing the place.

Some of those present reported other odd, circular cloud formations above them. There were also sightings of a star. I am still trying to get a copy," Soares himself said he saw a cloud in the form of a hand.

Third, and most spectacular, the earth omen: The stones taken from Montemaria by Fr. Nap and the people of St. Francis of Assisi were reported to have limited tumors and dia betes patients. (See boxnow, Dec. 2, 2007, or search for "montemaria healing stones" at www.newadvent.com.)

And Oct. 12, other news of the healing stones had spread: like wildfire, Salvator celebrated a healing Mass at Montemaria. Some 400 devotees were in attendance, and the stones like stands decorated on them.

Salvator, who had been to most Soares then, said: "Montemaria is a sacred place of healing, just like Lourdes and Fatima."

When the "back priest" and the healing priest finally met on Dec. 10, they embraced like old friends.

Message from Medjugorje

Perhaps by divine inspiration, Soares had envisioned Montemaria as a global healing center.

He did not even know that this might be a fulfillment of a Marian message in Medjugorje that the Philippines would become a global spiritual center one day.

Indeed, Montemaria may be a continuation of Medjugorje, if the many omens lead to a realization.

Montemaria's global character is evident. Soares reports that many people in Europe and America are asking about it.

Foreigners know more about Montemaria than Filipinos do because of the Internet [See www.fatherbartolomeo.com and www.montemariebrothers.com.org]. They are all anxious to go to Montemaria even when there is nothing there now except makeshift altar cauge.

Big plans, designed by architect Jerson Mangio, are afoot at Montemaria.

Divine accident

Mangio met Soares by "divine accident" in Ormoc, Cebu, which is the base of the latter's congregation, Companions of the Cross.

The architect instantly allowed his services for free.

Mangio's blueprint includes the first two edifices that will rise into this year—a residence for the brothers called the House of St. Joseph [to be dedicated by SMDF stalwarts Greg and Pat Montelibano], and a prayer chapel called the House of Mary [to replace "doors in the last brick" of an unclear shrine in Ephesus, Turkey].

The magnificent of Our Lady of the Poor Converting to Sinners, to include the poor in spirit and not just the financially poor] will follow. The entire will stand 300 meters tall and will include a 40-meter pedestal and a complex of large rooms of several floors.

There will also be an enemy the size of a cathedral, and a dozen or so chapels scattered all over the 48-hectare complex.

Marian apparitions

The history of Marian apparitions through the centuries, from Fatima to Lourdes to Medjugorje, shows that they often occur before scandalous.

The appearance in Montemaria and before the bloody Spanish Civil War, at Lourdes before World War I, and at Medjugorje before the bloodbath of the Serbian war.

It is as if the Lord is hurriedly reaching out to a sinful world through His mother, the last and truly prophet of the New Testament.

The flood of healing is en route, a warning for humanity to return to His fold.

This is the meaning flowing throughout the Old and New Testaments: the desire for reconciling humanity with God—sin and repentance, the return to His fold, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Proper look

In his homilies, Soares always stresses the lack of prayer. He no longer having time for the Lord attitude, as the essential ingredient behind the disappointments manifested in antipope terminal ailments such as cancer and His holy whole prophecy seem to His fold [manifested in rampant healing].

He used Saint's words as an indictment for these messages, which are to all of those in Internet and Nicolas.

Will Montemaria rise as a global center for fulfillment of the Lord's healing message?

For inquiries, e-mail ourarnold@salutmail.com.ph.

IN THE KNOW

The house on Vito Cruz: Family's heroic heritage . . .

From page A1

1940) was paid.

Our parents asked Juan Halgol, who later became a Malacañang Palace, to build their home. Halgol built a two-storied house in 1941. Ironically, it was finished by the fashion of the day, which was set once the dirt not just cops are down but incorporated the concept into his own design using Filipino motifs and materials.

Halgol's son, Ing architect, the Japanese had beheaded my father and took away all our worldly goods.

Before the war

Before World War II, the house was filled with activity. Visitors had meetings to build an army for the Philippines. It (a) was involved as president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs. At the time, women's suffrage was the thing. Our mother, who also involved with the Red Cross, the Philippine Girl Scouts and other organizations. She even produced Filipino cinema.

The boys, who were studying at La Salle, would come home to the other houses would have. The 10 stories—5 stories from either of the front—saved our home. We were all in the house, except for my father.

During the war, Dra. Japanese Army government our house for their use. Toward the end of the war, the Japanese moved out and took with them all our furniture and household items.

Thus, we all came home to an empty house. Empty house. Except for the Japanese had beheaded my father and took away all our worldly goods.

Before the war

Before World War II, the house was filled with activity. Visitors had meetings to build an army for the Philippines. It (a) was involved as president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs. At the time, women's suffrage was the thing. Our mother, who also involved with the Red Cross, the Philippine Girl Scouts and other organizations. She even produced Filipino cinema.

The boys, who were studying at La Salle, would come home to our lunch. Often, they would invite their classmates to play basketball or just to get together.

The two girls were the last to be born so they were left home just playing, waiting to grow up like the boys. My sister studying at Maryknoll and learned our table manners from lola (grandmother).

In May 1941, father sent mother, my siblings Hector and Nancy, to Iloilo to escape the worst of the bombing. My father was supposed to join the family in December that year, but World War II broke out on Dec. 8, 1941.

Life moves on

My mother, my siblings and I did not return to the Philippines until November 1945. Manila was devastated. The house, by some miracle of 10 stories, was still intact.

My mother, a single parent, worked as Centro Escolar University (CEU) and later became its president. She died in 1973.

My brother Patricio became a priest. I taught at several universities before joining the corporate world working for Mondragon.

My sister Batchie married Conrado Aytcjuc; they have two boys and one girl. She later became executive vice president of CEU.

The rest of my brothers got married and held responsible jobs. Lim married Fanny Alejaba and worked for San Miguel Corp. before moving to Liberty Mapua and was with Philippine Airlines. Vicente Jr. married Si-ta Fernandez and worked for Delmonte.

Nation-building

Through the years, my mother became more involved in nation-building. She also started many traditions such as the Christmas family get-together, the Halagos clan reunion, and giving the first inquiries to all graduating cadets at the Philippine Military Academy.

Patricio and I belonged to the Hearts and Arrows Club and many parties were held in our Vito Cruz home.

Much later, we would hold meetings in plan and strategize ways and means to replace the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Vito Cruz was the venue in the planning and making of the film of the funeral of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

Gift to the nation

Our house for over 70 years housed events, including birthdays, weddings, love affairs, family and death.

The house which started with our parents and six children now has a clan of 100.

Patricio and I say in Vito Cruz together with Dante Ayuyao [son of Batchie and Cesar] and Lou Dia [Lou's daughter].

Although my other siblings have their own houses, they still consider Vito Cruz as their home.

Our heritage is our gift to the nation.

Stage set for RP as global healing center like Lourdes

Wanted Indonesians pay to avoid capture, says military

By Alexis Pope

THE MILITARY YESTERDAY said two wanted members of the regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah are doling out money to communities in Mindanao in an effort to elude a military dragnet.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Nelson Allaga said Indonesian explosives expert Dulmatin and Umar Patek were using Al Qaeda seed funds to establish safe havens in communities where they are hiding would keep quiet about their location.

"They are spreading money from their organization to the communities there to elude capture. In fact they are undoing the wrong deeds of their capture to escape from they are not caught," Allaga told the Inquirer.

He did not say how the two fugitives managed to get hold of funds from the terror group.

Dulmatin, together with Umar Patek, is believed to be behind the 2002 Bali bombing in Indonesia that killed more than 200 people, mostly foreign tourists.

The United States has put up a reward of up to $10 million for Dulmatin's capture. Patek carries a $1-million reward for his arrest.

The two Jemaah Islamiyah men also eluded a military dragnet in Jolo. The military had said the Abu Sayyaf group had been helping Dulmatin and Patek evade capture. There have been reports the group has slipped out of Jolo despite the dragnet and are now either in Tawi-Tawi or Basilan.

Allaga refused to confirm reports that Dulmatin was in Tawi-Tawi while Patek was said behind in Jolo.

The Abu Sayyaf, a group that has launched bombings and kidnappings up in the past decade, has links to the JI, which in turn is being supported by Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

The duo's travel has heralded movement of cadres in Western Mindanao, particularly Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, provinces.

Allaga said the troops would pursue the cadres for the AFP, as well as the two foreign terrorists.

3 suspects in Cotabato videoke blast nabbed

COTABATO CITY—GOVERNMENT security forces arrested three suspects in the May 3 bombing of a videoke bar here that killed a 24-year-old woman and wounded eight others, police said yesterday.

Senior Supt. Willy Enriquez, city police chief, said Ryan Mole Eshil, Ramon Rokan and Abdul Taher were arrested in Barangay Mother Ignacia here in separate 9 a.m. to Friday by police and members of the Task Force Tugis.

He said the suspects, all residents of Figkulungan village in Buayan Island, Parang, Maguindanao, did not resist arrest.

Enriquez said interrogators and the security guard of the videoke bar positively identified one of the suspects as the man who brought in a paper bag suspected to have contained a homemade bomb fashioned from a mortar shell.

"They were supposed to leave the explosive somewhere else but when they saw a police car, they hurriedly went into the bar," Enriquez said.

Chief Supt. Pelimon Simpatin, Central Mindanao police chief, said the heavier explosives recovered in the slain security guard's house were not used in the bombing.

"Two other witnesses corroborated the statement of the guard pointing to the three in the incident," Enriquez said.

Chief Insp. Samson Obang, police mobile group chief who led the arresting team, said the suspects denied involvement in the blast.

"What we have is very strong case against the three," Enriquez said, adding that shrapnel and bone lifted against them.

Maj. Alberto Sidhadhatan, chief of the 6th Wesmincom's Civil-Military Operations Battalion, said the bomb, remotely detonated by cell phone, was powerful and was meant to maim as many people as possible.

Aside from the 81-mm mortar shell, it is said had highly flammable powder and splinters as components.

Enriquez said police had reserved looking at the possible involvement of other groups like al-Khobar and the Abu Sayyaf in the explosion.

"All angles are being considered," he said. Edwin Fernandez, Josiffiya Walters and Charlie Arturo, Inquirer Mindanao

Trucks with TNT stopped, released

ROXAS CITY—Police stopped three trucks loaded with explosives and expedited declines in the town of Mambusao early morning Saturday, suspecting something the transported Pentacord, Police Office (PPO) here said.

Upon investigation, however, the motorists' consignee presented documents proving the legality of the items seized, prompting the police to release the three trucks and their cargo.

Responsible said the documents issued to Nikas dala were authentic as confirmed by the Firearms and Explosive Division in Camp Crame.

The report said the three trucks contained 1,300 sticks of dynamite, 20,000 blasting caps, 162,000 m of detonating cord, 34,000 connectors, 162 m of safety fuse, 4,244 fuse lighters, 2,320 primers and 97 rolls of connectors.

Senior Insp. Arnie Gallardo, Mambusao police chief, said the trucks were seized by 6:00 (forthcoming) Officials of the Civil Security Group based in Camp Crame and the truck were fooled to show

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Total Quality Management	Dr. Tanhueco, Benito J.	Thursday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.

Makati Campus

Course Title	Professor	Day/Time
Public Governance	Dr. Mercado, Eduardo C.	Monday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Starting a New Business Abroad	Tiqueo, Alexander G.	Tuesday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Management Financial Planning	Quadrilatero, Raymund	Tuesday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Global Trade	Bautista, Daniel G.	Wednesday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Consumer Behavior Research	Bueno, Leah	Wednesday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Introduction to Culture & Arts Management	Valenzuela, Anna Francesca G.	Wednesday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Humanistic Human Resource Management	Sison, Patricia C.	Thursday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Capital Markets	Velasco, Carlos L. Jr.	Thursday / 6:00-9:15 p.m.
Franchise Marketing	Lagman, Oscar P.	Saturday / 9:30-11:45 a.m.
Corporate Tax Management	To be announced	Saturday / 9:30-11:45 a.m.
Sports Enterprise	Quisumbing, Bernardo	Saturday / 9:30-11:45 a.m.
Labor Relations	Alba, Bienvenido, Salvador P.	Saturday / 1:30-4:45 p.m.
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Classes start on January 7, 2008.

THE TOPIC WAS POLITICS. Of course in countries with presidents, Joseph Estrada's people present at the Kapihan sa Sulo on Saturday included—on the occasion's 2010 theme left, top, Bulacan Rep. Josie Dela Cruz and spokesperson of Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Abel Ysmael Cruz; and bottom, Estrada's spokesperson, Ariel Ilarde. JOAN BONDOC

Noli is admin's best bet

From page A1

Lakas-CMD, is reportedly looking to choose its standard-bearer in 2010 from among De Castro, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr.

Malacañang Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita also confirmed that Mr. Richard Gordon is said to be also considering a run for the presidency.

Lakas executive director Ray Roquero yesterday told the business paper that the ruling party might "adopt" De Castro.

But Roquero added that De Castro had to "prove" that she can unite Lakas in the process of Fernando and Belmonte.

De Castro and Gordon, despite having proved an ability to win an elective post on the national level, are outside the fold of Lakas.

Fernando and Belmonte are Lakas members, but neither has executed a nationwide electoral campaign.

Another administration stalwart reportedly being considered for a run for the presidency is Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC).

Of the five, only Fernando has campaigned, declared himself available for nomination as Lakas standard-bearer.

Belmonte, however, has not ruled out a run. On Friday, "You can't be too coy about this. You have to let people know what you want."

Liability

Tamano said that for many qualified senatorial candidates in the 2007 midterm elections, their affiliation with the administration coalition proved to be a liability.

"Yes, I want to run," he said. But he focuses on Friday.

END OF THE HOLIDAYS
A family enjoys the last weekend of the holidays with a picnic at the Quezon Memorial Circle. Tomorrow classes resume as all schools and those who held out for a longer break will be trudging back to work. YOY QUILOY

PCSO says bishop wrong, Lotto funds not going to Palace

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) yesterday dismissed as baseless, speculative that the additional funds to be generated by the increase in ticket price of its Super Lotto 6/49 game ticket price would not really go to charitable causes.

PCSO spokesperson Dr. Larry Cedro told the Inquirer in a phone interview that the agency remained apolitical to its mandate for charity work.

"There is no proof. There is no basis," Cedro said, in reaction to allegations by Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz that the price increase might be intended "to feed the greed of certain characters in the ruling administration for more and more money for their own personal and/or partisan intentions."

Cruz had said that he feared it hard to believe that the PCSO doubled its bets from from P10 to P20 so it could collect more money for its charitable causes.

The prelate noted that since the PCSO was under the Office of the President, "who is not known for love of poverty" the people had to question so to where the additional funds will actually go.

But Cedro assured the public the PCSO would not allow its funds to be used for political purposes.

"Although the PCSO is a government entity, we are apolitical in rendering assistance to charity. The use of our funds would solely be for charity as we are mandated by law," Cedro said.

Cruz said it was unlikely the PCSO lacked funds for its charitable causes, citing its huge spending for advertising.

Gambling entity

The prelate said the PCSO seemed "intent on becoming a gambling entity."

Cruz, who chairs the Episcopal Commission on Family and Life, has been a crusader against gambling, particularly "jueteng," the illegal numbers game.

The PCSO doubled the price of the Super Lotto 6/49 game ticket to P20 on Dec. 31, 2007.

The PCSO, however, clarified that the price increase was limited to the 6/49 game.

In Malacañang, an official said the increase in the ticket price appeared to be justifiable.

Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde said in a radio interview that the PCSO had positively argued reasons for the abrupt hike in the price of the 6/49 lottery tickets.

"Their objective really is to be able to raise more money for charity," he said, adding that he was "convinced of the justification (given by) the PCSO."

Explanation demanded

Remonde yesterday talked with PCSO chair Sergio Valencia and General Manager Rey Dilaire after President Macapagal-Arroyo—who was not informed of the price hike—demanded an explanation.

"They explained that their basic objective is to ... give big, big prizes and of course they will be able to raise more money for charity," he said.

Remonde told ABS-CBN that the PCSO officials denied that pure bettors would be deprived of a chance to participate in the lotto given the new odds—6/42 and 6/45—whose ticket price remained at P20 each.

Asked if the Palace would block the increase, Remonde said, "It can't. Even Mrs. Arroyo would want to get the facts first."

With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

Marriage annulments down last year, says Catholic Church

By Beverly T. Mainisbal

THE NUMBER OF CHURCH-annulled marriages has declined in 2007, according to the Catholic Church, but the number of those denied annulment was higher.

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz, Judicial Vicar of the Metropolitan Appeal Tribunal (MAT) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said yesterday there were only 111 cases from six archdioceses and dioceses in the north of the Pasig River region that reached the tribunal for review in 2007.

The number, he said, was small as than the number submitted to the MAT in previous years, which usually reached 300.

While the number of marriage nullity cases for review was lower last year, Cruz said, the number of denied cases was higher in 2007.

Of the 111 cases brought by petitioners to the MAT, 72 nullity cases were denied by the Church. The MAT has denied about 30 nullity petitions in 2006.

Despite the trend, Cruz said, the decline "does not send any message at all because there are many couples who don't want separation."

He explained that married couples who wanted to separate would rather opt for divorce or file for civil annulment or choose other means apart from the nullity granted by the Church.

Cruz added it was not a question of whether the Church was happy about the decreasing trend, because the matter mainly involved the "pastoral of truth."

"Nobody is benefited by a marriage that was considered null and void. Overall, of nullity are sterile to (those)," he said.

He said annulled marriages were usually the result of deliberate to the "personality constitutional defects."

"There are people not qualified to get married, real because of malice or ill will but because of these psychological, emotional, mental personality structure," said the prelate.

Cruz said the general principle dictates for nullity, potentially when the couple get married when they should not have done so and were only pressured, coerced, trapped and threatened to.

The Church also annulled marriages on the grounds of natural disorders and sexual identity disorders, he said.

"When a person is confused and 'confusing,' the last thing he should do is get married because marriage requires very clear reason and deliberate will," Cruz said.

All systems go for Black Nazarene feast

By Beverly T. Mainisbal

PREPARATIONS FOR THE Feast of the Black Nazarene on Jan. 9 are 90-percent complete, organizers said yesterday.

The Pieta Committee of the Black Nazarene has rolled out all the faithful who want to take part in the procession on Wednesday to obey the Church volunteers and follow safety precautions to the event could proceed safely.

"Let us do our best so no one dies or gets hurt," said Msgr. Jose Clemente Ignacio, parish priest of the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene.

The parish office of the Quiapo church briefed the media yesterday on the purpose, route it is conducting to ensure that the procession would be conducted in an orderly manner.

Ignacio said a briefing would be held for volunteers on Sunday for final instructions before the Jan. 9 festivities.

Ignacio said they had also asked Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim to lead the procession of the Black Nazarene image.

The feast of the Black Nazarene will kick off at 6 a.m. with the celebration of a High Mass by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales.

Another High Mass will follow at 12:15 p.m. which will be celebrated by Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo.

The procession of the Black Nazarene image in the area around Quiapo Church will follow right after the 12:15 p.m. Mass.

Hunt ordered for cat killers

MAKATI MAYOR Jejomar Binay yesterday ordered police to probe last month's slaughter of 29 cats and kittens at Dasmariñas village.

Police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz has ordered a team of investigators to track down the cat killers, who peppered the felines with air-gun pellets.

"Our investigators are now coordinating with barangay Dasmariñas officials and the Dasmariñas Village Association for witnesses," Cruz said.

Binay said the perpetrators should be arrested because they pose a threat to the security of animals, residents and visitors of the village.

"I have ordered the police to arrest those responsible as soon as possible. The suspects have violated a national law and a city ordinance on animal welfare," the mayor said.

On Dec. 16, 2007, several cats were shot using air guns with lead pellets.

The felines, which were up for adoption, were under the care of Compassion and Responsibility for Animals (Care) Philippines, which is helping DNA address the cat problem.

Julie M. Aurelio

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, January 6, 2008
Epiphany of the Lord

1st Reading: Is 60:1-6

Arise, Jerusalem, shine, for your light has come.
The Glory of Yahweh rises upon you.
Night will cover the earth and gloomy clouds veil the peoples, but Yahweh now rises upon you and over you his glory appears.
Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes round about and see: they are all gathered and come to you, your sons from afar, your daughters nursed by nurses.
This night will make your hair radiant, your heart throbbing and full; the riches of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you.
A flood of camels will cover you, carnivans from Midian and Ephah.
Those from Sheba will come, bringing with them gold and incense, all singing the praise of Yahweh.

Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6
2nd Reading:

Brethren and sisters, you may have heard of the graces God bestowed means for your sake. By a revelation he gave me the knowledge of his mysterious designs, as I have explained in a few words.

This mystery was not made known in past generations but only now through revelations given to holy apostles and prophets. Now the nonJewish people share the inheritance; in Christ Jesus the non-Jews are incorporated and are in equal the Promise.

Matthew 2:1-12
When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in Judea, during the reign of King Herod, some men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We saw the rising of his star in the east and have come to honor him."

When Herod heard this he was greatly disturbed and with him all Jerusalem. He immediately called a meeting of all high-ranking priests and the scribes, and asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they told him, "for this is what the prophet wrote: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the clans of Judah, for from you will come a leader, the one who will be shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called the wise men and asked them the precise time the star appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with the instruction, "Go and get precise information about this child. As soon as you have found him, report to me, so that I too may go and honor him."

After the meeting with the king, they set out. The star that they had seen in the East went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. The wise men were overjoyed on seeing the star again. They went into the house and where they saw the child with Mary his mother, they knelt and worshiped him. They opened their bags and offered him their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.

In a dream they were warned not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their home country by another way.

Commentary:

The Feast of Epiphany celebrates the discovery of Jesus, the True Light by wise men from distant lands. We must follow the light of the star and find the Light of the World. They represent the peoples of diverse races, cultures and walks of life who are drawn to the Lord's wonderful light.

As you look at the figures of the magi in the Christmas scene, give thanks for the tremendous gift you have received in being drawn to the light of the Lord. Consider ways in which your life today are reflect that light, leading others to discover the great gift of Jesus Christ.

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OPINION

Defeat by experience

EDITORIAL

OBSERVERS NOTED THAT THE UNITED STATES has succumbed to election fever much earlier than usual. The explanation for this is that Americans are heartily sick of George W Bush and are raring to elect his successor. The mid-term elections shifted control of Congress to the Democratic party and unraveled Republican ambitions of establishing a permanent majority in politics. And so, a full two years before the presidential elections, political temperature was achieved by Democrats aspiring for the nomination of their party.

Among those running for the Democratic party's nomination is a young African-American, whose candidacy for senator to Illinois was a highlight of the party's mid-term re-conquest of Congress: Barak Obama. His main contender would turn out to be a former first lady and incumbent senator, Hillary Rodham Clinton. The two proved magnificent at fund raising, amassing close to $200 million between them.

But of the two, it was Obama who proved fresh, and capable of summoning rhetorical feats to force reminiscence of the past golden-tongued orators the Democrats have been so lavishly gifted with. Not since the 1960s, in the heyday of Teddy Kennedy, Mario Cuomo and Jesse Jackson, has oratory been so central to the appeal of a political figure. In the 1980s, the oratory of Kennedy, Cuomo and Jackson was lushly, eloquent voices of doomed liberalism. When Obama entered the public eye with his address to the 2004 Democratic Party convention, his was the clarion call of a revitalized party.

The Clinton campaign, faced with the freshman senator from Illinois, proclaimed itself a campaign built on the bedrock of experience, in contrast to what it described as an undeniably idealistic—but as inexperienced as to be shallow—African-American candidate. That message proved incapable of clinching the opening battle in the Democratic primary war, in the state of Iowa. Shrillness screamed, in the wake of the Jan. 3 party caucuses, that Obama obtained 38 percent of the vote, with former vice-president and candidate John Edwards coming in a surprising second with 30 percent, and heavyweight Clinton third at 29 percent.

To be sure, Iowa was only the first battle in a year-long contest between the Democratic aspirants, a bruising campaign fought on a parallel track by the Republicans, who are trying to come up with a candidate capable of retaining the White House. However, Obama has made his mark, putting believers in experience on the defensive, and establishing character as a potentially defining issue in the presidential race.

Obama, remarkably, has energized the American youth to support his campaign, harnessing every means, from MySpace, the online networking site, to Twitter, with its terse, instantaneous updates, to mobilize support. His opposition to the war in Iraq and his refusal to accept the divide-and-conquer strategy—including its cynical and mean strategems for mobilizing support and crushing opposition mastered by the Republicans—undoubtedly resonate with the youth. It reflects a welcome change in the American political culture, where, for the first time, an African-American isn't a fringe or token, but a leading candidate.

Filipinos can only reflect on the larger message being sent by the revival in the fortunes of the Democratic party. Whether it's the ongoing rehabilitation of Al Gore from defeated politician to world statesman, to the manner in which Obama has put the political pros and opinionators on the defensive. In both cases, both men have tapped into a yearning that isn't even specifically national, but probably global.

We can only hope the Filipino youth, attuned to all things American, take a positive cue from this development and finally make themselves what they have successors been proclaimed to be but failed to achieve: a potent factor in our political life. We have too many recycled old faces begging the political limelight; and too many political operators who assume they have everything figured out. It's about time the pros, who have put us in the mess we're in, were proven wrong.

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SEPARATE OPINION

JOAQUIN A. CHU

THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION PROVIDES that in case of the President's death, resignation, removal or permanent disability he shall be succeeded by the Vice President. There was a similar provision in the Commonwealth Constitution but not in the interim law Commission of Election, who many have thought it was unnecessary because he would live and reign forever.

The title on presidential succession was generally accepted as some kind of political compliment for an important but not top-rung foreign political figure whose only visit would be to pay for the President's death so he could take over. As vice president to George Washington, the distinguished John Adams wrote ruefully: "My country has in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man conceived or his imagination conceived."

John Nance Garner, who was vice president during Franklin D. Roosevelt's first two terms in the White House, referred his position to one more important than a pail of warm spit. Others have called it a fifth wheel, a spare tire in the trunk compartment. When John C. Calhoun ran for and was elected to the Senate in 1832, he readily resigned as vice president of the United States.

Yet, despite the generally low regard for the vice presidency, the succession rule has occasionally served its practical purpose here as well as in the United States. In the last century, veteran statesmen was succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt, Warren Harding by Calvin Coolidge, F.D. Roosevelt by Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy by Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon by Gerald Ford. All the Presidents (except perhaps Coolidge) and some of those who succeeded like Ford, Johnson and Truman, Coolidge proved certainly much better than I looking.

In this country, the rule was applied when Manuel L. Quezon was succeeded in 1944 by Sergio Osmeña Sr., Manuel Roxas by Elpidio Quirino in 1948, and Ramon Magsaysay by Carlos P. Garcia in 1957, all because of the presidents' death. On Philippine presidents has left Malacañang before the expiration of his or her term by reason of removal or resignation, although such modes of termination may have been, or are now, absolutely deserved.

Removal can be effected only after a tiresome bid impeachment, but this method is often saved with many self-defeating requirements. The example of Joseph Estrada's impeachment is not so hopeful. Despite the strong evidence piled up against him and the just requirement for his conviction and removal, the proceedings, had they continued, would have resulted in his acquittal. The plain fact was that he was supported by 11 of the senators against only 10 of those out. Besides, the votes were not enough to convict if the new thirds was required by the Constitution for a judgment against him. Estrada would have been convicted and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo might now still be elected District Member of his Children.

The other remedy is resignation, which is subject but no less difficult if the president is resolved to hang on to his or her post, especially if obvious irregularities were committed to win it. Suspicion of such misconduct will hamper the will to resign. Only the strongest will can strengthen such suspicion. Moreover, the abandonment of presidential prerogatives subjects to plunder will make an unwelcome president reject all suggestions to forfeit the remaining names from the hostage coffers of the nation.

Resignation may also be an honorable way for a worthy statesman whose politics may have reduced the people's confidence, as when Truman quit just due to disputes but with high praise. It may also be prompted by death or permanent disability, which is usually caused not by politics but by sickness like "that Bush a bitch is," like the disease that finally killed the hideous Imelda Pol Ito's Cumbersome.

Where the president loses his authority before the end of his term by any of the means prescribed in our Constitution, the vice president ceases to be a superfluous excrescence and becomes the new president. The people's feelings over his assumption will depend on the record of the past administration and his own qualifications. Quezon's death saddened his countrymen who were nevertheless comforted by the succession of the highly respected Osmeña. There was general relief when martyr's family was restored—or resigned—in 2001 but also a restored of public confidence with his substitution by Vice President Arroyo.

Sadly, the honeymoon is over and the people are asking for a divorce. There is now a growing aggression for his demise or step down out of a sense of patriotism and self-sacrifice, if not conviction. However, there is a flaw in that scenario, and it is in the required constitutional succession: the is Vice President Noli de Castro, who has not enough political stature or support political experience and was elected only for his popularity on a television newscaster.

The desperate speculations in choosing him in lieu of the present ruler would be like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. But for us hope for the best and prepare for the unthinking like Truman was a failed haberdasher before he became an estimable President of the United States.

Turn around

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A PRIEST SEEN A priest who stood by the road with a big sign that read: "The end is near! Turn around before it's too late!"

Curious as some are religious turn!" called a driver as he sped on.

Then driver followed the sound of screeching tires and a big splash. The priest looked at the priest and said, "Don't you think we should turn just the sign THEIR OUT instead?"

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mt. 2, 1-12), we are told that the sign that led the wise men to Bethlehem was the rising star from the East. They must know how to read and how to follow the sign. Were are the people who know how to read the signs of the times. Beside are the people who, like Herod, cannot see beyond their personal vision and ambition. Can you see beyond? Are you receptive to God's signs?

* * *

Today is the Feast of the Lord's Epiphany. The Lord reveals Himself so as to as many ways every during this our day and time. The Lord is not wanting in letting to know His message and His presence. It is we who are failing in discerning and identifying His will. We know what is right and what is wrong, but often we follow our—and not His—will, and this often leads to misery and even disaster.

* * *

Look back. If only we were more obedient to God's will, we would be living more peaceful lives. He makes us, and the people around us, unhappy. So we begin a new year, let us all humbly ask the Lord to remove the sins and the bad habits that bring pain to ourselves and to our loved ones.

* * *

The wise men were focused in their search for the savior. Herod, on the other hand, was also "searching" for the savior, but along with his search was a big personal agenda. All that he was seeking was self-preservation and self-glorification. Let us be very careful, let us be very wise when we deal with people who exude Compañia believe that it was an angel that saved their 10-month-old daughter Miriam Angela from near-death last New Year's Eve. About 11:30 p.m. the couple noticed some strips of paint on the bars of their crib. When they looked up the ceiling, they saw a three-foot-by-six-foot piece of plaster about to fall. They jumped in Miranda Subdivision, Quezon City, in the house of former Pangasinan Gov. Rafi Coloma, Amante's grandfather who fondly calls her "Lucky 5." because she is his ninth grandchild. Lucky indeed, and loved by God, protected by angels and that goes also for all of us!

* * *

Never underestimate this prayer: Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

* * *

As we begin a new year, let us be guided by this thought: "In the end, what matters in life is not so much what you bought, how what you built, nor so much what you got, but what you shared; not so much your success but your significance; not so much your competence, but your character; not so much what you earned, but what you did."

* * *

"Who is blind? He who put me in other words for me. Who is crazy? He who can see nothing because he thinks his eye. Who is poor? He who is troubled with too many desires. Who is sick? He who is happy with his lot." The 2008 let us turn inward for the answers we are intellectuals and on a matter. The key is not outside. But let us not forget that our "outlook." Want of it, let us not forget our "up-look." Praying this 2008 will be a better year for all of us, in all aspects, in Jesus' name. Amen.

* * *

A tomorrow with the Lord:

Lord, help me to see myself, before it's too late, drive.

Shabby treatment of OFWs at airport

WITH DUE RESPECT

Antonio V. Taguiwalo

MY FITHERED COLLEAGUE, COMRADE DR. Quine, picked the overseas Filipino worker (OFW) as the Filipino of the Year 2007 (INQUIRER, 12/30/07). Comrade Quine says, OFWs propelled the economy more than anyone else, made the peso appreciate, and banked their relatives' appetite for basics, cars, motorcycles, TV sets, appliances and foodstuff. In turn, Manny Villar's Para Lahat, Inquirer says the media, and Noy Aquino's Automatic Anti-Poverty System, supported, lauded and worshiped the OFW bayanihan all-out, to both the rich and the poor. Of course, these feminine manifestations did not escape the gay sidekicks.

Dec's lament. Even the Catholic Church has organized major work among OFWs in churches in America and Europe. In Hong Kong, Britain and other "friendly" places, Filipino workers wash their wards the two "Hoovers" for the Christmas season. Small wonder they have been acclaimed "Bagong Bayani" [new heroes]. The big question is: Why are they so shabbily treated, especially at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) where they return to their work places, yet are so very specific.

Our daughter Dec's ordination for Maria Theresa] finished her bachelor's degree in the business administration and Master's in Business Administration at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. In 1998, while she was a manager at the Corporate Planning Department of the Sovereign Corp., the Insurance Data Processing Corporation (IDPC), a Philippine-Singapore joint venture in New York Stock Exchange, offered her an executive position. She was given a signing bonus, a salary she could not refuse, free relocation and travel for her family and other privileges in short, she became an "expat" in the United States.

She has been promoted any governments assistant to her job or daily life. After all, her mortgage is guaranteed by the family complete health insurance benefits. Sometimes, whenever she came to visit, she always parents applied for "document" and willingly paid all fees required by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). What she learned was the balance whatever she called back.

Returning OFWs employees. Last Dec. 31, the same day her annual visa. A week after, on Jan. 22, she and her friend off for Bangkok and her back here on Jan. 28, with the intention of returning on June 30th on the early morning of Jan. 2, 2009. Prior to her departure for Bangkok, she applied for the clearance required by the POEA from all OFWs who are returning to their places of work. With all of the usual visa clearances, in the first place, is beyond her.

In any event, two POEA-Detail personnel at the Visa said her visa, to obtain her clearance for her ID is up, she had to fall in line at their "Ticket-Out" open her return from Bangkok. The carefully searched her bag, she was told to return to work at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 28 and leaving for the United States on Jan. 2 at 7:45 a.m. The interviewing duty starts all non-working holidays, which made falling in line at the "Ticket-Out" impossible. Her client's telephone was consequently unplugged and no carriage by the day. "Wake hurting pain," they shouted. They also refused to give her a document application form.

My daughter is normally not spoken, outstanding and rarely agitated. But, frustrated though, she had heard of horror delays caused by POEA-Detail in NAIA. She had to be back at her ICBP office in New Jersey on Jan. 3. Her boss would accept no excuse. So, I decided to help in the manner in the last Saturday's Jan. 26.

Barangay's Cabinet member. I am able to reach Secretary Brion, through his mobile phone, on Dec. 27 evening. Immediately, he understood the predicament and really I'm said he was going to office in the afternoon of the following day (New Year's Eve?) to take care of the problem. He exchanged several text messages on the documents he should be brought in his office to process the document. I received the last one message at midnight (only at 12:01 a.m.) and the time that night.

Fine enough, Sec's POEA chairman was issued on the afternoon of Jan. 2. After the next all the needed documents and paid the necessary fees. She was able to board her flight early the next day and was in her office at ADP exit procedures on Jan. 3. Yet would have avoided all the hassles had taken the POEA personality, because non-Filipinos are not subjected to POEA red tape. Her husband and two daughters, who accompanied her, are Americans, but I advised her to remain a Filipino, in the hope that she had her family would settle down here and perhaps use her US-based salary to help our country.

Pity the poor OFWs. I deeply appreciate her secretary Brion and Undersecretary Lily Pineda's assist for Dec, but how about the poor, ordinary OFWs who are subjected to the same hassles and red tape? Many have missed flights due to the POEA's incompetence and inefficiency. Others have met heartrending cases.

At the NAIA, as I saw all "let that morning, I joined another OFW who—after enduring the long queues at the security section and the airport—was trying to get to the POEA Detail. He was consequently told to go to the POEA unit outside the secured area to get her clearance. Admitting she got it promptly, she had to waste another 30 minutes queuing up again to reach the same check-in counter. Tragic!

The POEA penchant OFWs as last one has shabby treatment is unbelievable. There must be a way of relieving the POEA and making its people as it could be routinely caring and efficient, without Cabinet-level intervention.

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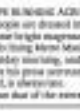
One man's fascist



REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricio Evangelista

THREE IS A PRE-STRIPE BUSINESS ACROSS THE CHAIR. man's glass down. 80 people are dressed in light pink blouses, mercifully not the same bright magenta that glares from wrinkle and washing clouds. Today Marcial Manahan is to lump pink into red on Friday morning, and the Chairman is late. The Chairman, says his press secretary with an apologetic squeeze of my hand, is always late.

His office is larger than that of the average senator's. His face is everywhere, smiling from enormous posters of newspaper letters featuring him, grinning from newsstands promising him as a report and even a third-republic book. Just the distance

From the distant of glossy white steel cards that enumerate his philosophy for a lower city. There are picture frames with dignitaries and the obligatory photograph of the Chairman standing at his desk with the President's portrait over his right shoulder. His secretary suggests that I have a look at a reading material, and tonight she is not alone where 10 copies of the mass events have featuring "his Government" are piled on a long table, with more copies fanned on the floor. Copies of an Ilio. A newspaper article announcing the Cultus party's search for a standard bearer—with "Rapper Pumanda of the Master Master Development Incorporated" highlighted in green—are stashed no more than, among with the month's own publication with the Chairman's face looming large on the banner.

Colored photocopies of Darby Paredes' Makapa opinion article are also available as self-esteem highlighting—the line in yellow: that "Elite student reports is corrupt" and that "Some years, one can be forgiven for the one mistake"—what if the missed sentence like Rapper Pumanda to run the mayor as President?" The article's conclusion is also highlighted. "Bayani as president may not be such a bad idea," so unlike anyone else we have elected before, the Chairman is not a politician.

The Chairman, who built up the successful SF Group of Companies, calls himself a builder of character. Character, he says, is an individual's social behavior—"just to have a kind of social behavior that is in harmony with his fellow men." Social behavior, he says, means both witness and unwitness laws. Unwitness laws would be traditions, good values. "Many facts are many," he says, but he is hard pressed to identify them. When questioned, he stops to think. "Treasure," he finally answers. "You don't quarrel like your neighbor, you exercise some practices that may not be too good but are in certain norms tolerable."

He does not mention promptness.

The Chairman likes pink because it is calming, and he loves to do seminars for other builders in discipline. He has installed at least along roads, successfully reduced boundaries of squatters—many have been injured, and a handful have been killed—and discouraged many of the city's clogged highways. He has managed to save illegal vendors from their regular stomping grounds along roads, even encouraging his fans to vote for them on the vendors' business of goods.

In 1975, the Marcos government established the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, securing the province run by his wife, Imelda, the first governor of Metro Manila. Fernando wants to complete Imelda's grand "City of Man," which she began in 1975 to make Metro Manila a more cohesive life, the centerpiece of a people's aspirations," the city would become the habitation of "the nobility, generosity and sociability which have made man the wonder of creation." Fernando, however, says he has a new name for this. intentionally.

Such a cohesive goal as the MMDA it to fulfill the desires of the individual. As to how this can be done, when millions in the metropolis have little access to employment and opportunity, he says that the MMDA is designing the the less privileged. "It is a kiss for them," linked about unemployment, for drives them to a path of jobs.

"We have to answer another question," "Because smart there were no unemployed wrong. "There are many jobs, but people have become so choosy, and some, because we tolerate them, can afford not to work." Aside from government programs and road construction, he says that there are 800 openings in traffic enforcement, for five salaries. To be a traffic enforcer, an applicant needs at least two years of college education, be physically fit and "emotionally well." To save says "They are managing cars to be outside of the road. We have to have some guy trained there."

Perhaps the lack of applicants is due to this requirement, I suggest... but he is voluminous. People, he says, are taking it easy. Some people—yes, including those people with years in college—would prefer to sell goodies in the streets. "Because even a traffic there, it's an easy job, sitting there, eating their sari-sari over there." In comparison, he argues, traffic enforcers work up early and spend eight hours on the road. Perhaps then, I suggest, traffic enforcement pays very little. Of course not, says the Chairman, and shakes his head at the stupidity of those he earlier embarrassed for their gray matter.

There is no doubt about his effectiveness in terms of implementation, displacement though it is. It is, for many people, a welcome change after years of political inaction. The doubts arise in the manner he wields power. Fernando does not believe in sharing it, nor does he believe in consultation. He answers to sharing it, nor does he believe in consultation. He answers to the President, interviewers a year that he is completed to compromise: many of the mayors of Metro Manila's cities and municipalities are unhappy with his high-handed manner, his task and litigation to consult elected leaders to ordinance to impose on the metropolis. Fernando, a presidential appointee, wants the authority to pass ordinances without consulting the 17 elected city councils. The mayors have ruled against him.

Many have called him a tyrant, even a bastin. His claim is that it is really very difficult to draw the line between a bastin, a thinker and a good person. He is banking can be the greater good. The greater good, of course, was the Marcos's justification for building the entire justification that inside Marcos used in walling up squatters and "beautifying" Manila. It is last week, says Fernando, that he is continuing.

The Chairman would like to be President, because I have the right background for the job." If the rest of the country believes that in 2010, it is not just a pink shirt along for the ride.

* * *

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Science and humanity

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE DIES, WHOLESALE AND PLACERS ME: very much in the news. It only takes a few reports of outbreaks of new and mysterious diseases to send the whole town into hysteria, with every new case discovered cited as a possible harbinger of a deadly threat that could wipe out humanity.

And in many cases, these fears do have a basis. HIV/AIDS has its now a major public health problem, especially in poor and underdeveloped countries where the fragile health delivery systems of poor nations, including the two largest countries in the world, China and India. The outbreak of SARS, which for many months held populations in pandemic fear in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Vancouver and Toronto, Canada, was contained in the Philippines, where as many there people died from it. And we are still apparently immune when our cousins "bird flu" are reported, even if in the Philippines, no one has yet died from infection of the avian virus.

This may be one reason for the success of the movie "I Am Legend," which takes as its central premise the decimation of humanity after the "cataclysmic virus," developed from a genetically modified measles virus to supposedly cure cancer, causes widespread death and mutation, turning humans into cannibalistic monsters.

As the movie discovered, Dr. Robert Neville, a military virologist, with a cure in himself nearly killed U.S. Military people, while the rest presumably died of the "infected." Alone in New York, "ground zero" of the epidemic, and desperately seeking a cure for the disease, Neville wonders if indeed he is "the last man on earth."

* * *

THE MOVIE is based on the novel by Richard Matheson, written in 1954, the book paints a post-apocalyptic scenario where a viral infection has turned humans into vampires and mutants.

Since the book's release, three movies based on its basic premise have been made: "The Last Man on Earth" in 1964, "The Omega Man," starring Charlton Heston, in 1971, and "I Am Legend," which is the novel's title. Other movies, such as "28 Days Later" and "28 Weeks Later," about the emergence of a race of vampires on earth, have also borrowed from the novel's basic premise, although not directly attributing inspiration to Matheson's work.

Director Francis Lawrence transports the novel's setting from Los Angeles to New York, and some of the most haunting scenes in the movie are of the city in ruins, with Neville apparently the only survivor of people, found with pushed inches in various states of decomposition, and in skyscrapers sounding empty and desolate.

Boasting the scenes in Neville, plagued with insomnia and emotional focus by his family, who he lost when they left the city and then burned himself and his pet dog at night, out of sight of the infected humans who, because the disease has made them sensitive to sunlight, can only hunt in the quarantined city in darkness.

But while Film is a fast-paced story, the hunt is Neville-wages against the disease and the subhumans who hide in dark corners. The movie is also about Neville's struggle to remain human, to avoid descending into madness or despair despite the blandness of his circumstances. Neville has professional chemistry as he would have a semblance of human interaction, are a poignant reminder that loneliness and loss of hope are as deadly as any virus.

SCIENTIFIC and technological progress has made Matheson's basic scenario not only plausible but even urgent. Certainly, it is much easier to believe that a virus that was created in the laboratory could escape and wreak havoc on humanity than that it could be the result of supernatural forces.

Yet enough, let's POEA chairman was issued on the afternoon of Jan. 2. After the next all the needed documents and paid the necessary fees. She was able to board her flight early the next day and was in her office at ADP exit procedures on Jan. 3. Yet would have avoided all the hassles had taken the POEA personality, because non-Filipinos are not subjected to POEA red tape. Her husband and two daughters, who accompanied her, are Americans, but I advised her to remain a Filipino, in the hope that she had her family would settle down here and perhaps use her US-based salary to help our country.

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The making of a murder in Pakistan

WORLD VIEW

Vincent Abbott

Afghanistan was out of the crosshairs.

Yet second term in office (2002-06) was longer and better, but her government again fell easily owing to charges of mismanagement and corruption. Her return to Pakistan by the intelligence agencies also played a part. The military had developed an entrenched distrust of her given her position as a popularly supported pro-Western leader who wanted peace with India.

After almost a decade in self-imposed exile, Bhutto's return to Pakistan in October gave her a benign political aura. Pakistan had undergone an unfortunate dictatorship and religious extremism in the mode played home with the fabric of society. A sensitive arrangement with Musharraf, with Powers's support—particularly from the United Kingdom and the United States—seemed her intention, which included the introduction of a new national charter, and somehow free and fair elections.

To the dismay of some democratic forces, Bhutto signed the pacts even after Musharraf imposed emergency rule on Nov. 3 and removed the country's top judges to ensure him re-election. Indeed, she even persuaded other opposition political leaders to participate in the planned Jan. 8 election, which she viewed as an opportunity to challenge religious extremist forces in the public square. She relied that opportunity by bravely returning to Pakistan despite the country's deeper serious threats to her life, arguing for a democratic and pluralistic Pakistan.

One can understand why religious extremists like al-Qaeda and Taliban would target her, and the government claims that it is impossible to determine a suicide bomber in a crowd. But Bhutto was repeatedly killed by a sharp shooter before the suicide blew himself up. In, in the eyes of Pakistani people, and especially of Bhutto's supporters, the intelligence services, either alone or in collaboration with extremists, finally decided to eliminate her.

Whether or not the government was involved, the fact remains that Pakistan has not a democratically elected leader. With Pakistan's future in the balance, the West's help and support will be crucial, but that means recognizing that Musharraf is not the only leader who can render Pakistan's nuclear arsenal safe from terrorists and extremists. On the contrary, by narrowing the current environment of instability and encouraging Musharraf himself since he regarded as one of Pakistan's biggest problems.

Project Syndicate

* * *

Vincent Abbott has served in the administrations of both Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and President Pervez Musharraf. He is now a research fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and the author of "Musharraf's Pride: Islamic Extremism, Global Terrorism, and America's War on Terror."

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TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to jaysevilla@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Jaime V. Sarmiento Jr.

Buddhist monks

One of the biggest events in Asia in 2007 was the march of the monks in Burma. Under scorching heat, they protested in Rangoon and other urban centers for days demonstrating an end to military rule, corruption and lack of democracy. The masses showed their mass was a surprise because monks in the country have been at the forefront of political and social changes. But the junta's bloody crackdown on the monks and other democracy activists is a sign that democracy remains elusive. Their show of courage has united international attention on Burma once again.

Abhisit Vejjajiva, 43

The head of the Democrat Party is a modern, articulate, savvy, handsome and intelligent. Born in England on Aug. 3, 1964, he graduated from Oxford University with a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. He earned his law degree from Thailand's Ramkhamhaeng University in 1992; he ran his seats in politics when he won and became an MP for Bangkok. He served as a minister to the Prime Minister's Office when the Democrats were part of the government coalition under Chuan Leekpai from 1997 to the late 1990s.

Under the Democrats' dominion owing in the 2005 elections, Abhisit was elected party leader. His only political current, according to his critics, is his good looks. However, his supporters counter that Abhisit's communities is your decency and unrivaled talent. If the Democrats form the next government, Abhisit may become Thailand's youngest prime minister in the post-war period.

Francis Escudero, 38

He has never made his ultimate dream a secret: of one day becoming president of the Philippines. Popularity issues aside, he comes from a political family. His father was a former congressman and agriculture secretary. As a young man, his public speaking and leadership skills were honed by helping out in his father's campaigns.

At 29, he was elected to the House of Representatives and managed to become the youngest chairman of politicians dubbed the young Turks. He became known as a staunch supporter of deposed President Joseph Estrada and critic of President Macapagal-Arroyo. After finishing three terms as congressman, he ran for senator in the 2007 midterm elections, receiving the second highest number of votes. Currently, the media are speculating that he may run for the presidency in the 2010 elections.

Rahul Gandhi, 37

Rahul, a scion of India's Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, is seen as a political figure in the ruling Indian National Congress party, able to mediate young people that are unimpressed with the old faces of India's 1 billion people. Schooled at Harvard and Cambridge universities, Rahul was appointed general secretary of the ruling party in 2007, effectively taking over day-to-day running of India's largest political group.

Coming from the famously family, which has been in charge of India for 40 of the 60 years since independence, it is no surprise that he is being touted as a future prime minister. His party is not hiding the fact that he is being groomed for the post, following in the footsteps of his father, Rajiv, his grandmother, Indira, and his great-grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's founding leader.

Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, 27

He is the world's youngest head of state. He assumed the throne as the fifth Dragon King of Bhutan on Dec. 14, 2006 after his father announced abdication and the unanimous assumption of the throne to his eldest son. The young king, dubbed "Prince Charming" by overseas fans because of his charm and good looks, has a degree from Oxford University's Magdalen College.

The new king's coronation is one small step, but, after which he will be head of state but won't take his biggest responsibility in the country: leading Bhutan's democratic to a democratic system until elections to be in November. The country is holding its parliamentary elections this month and a general election will follow in February. While his role as king may be limited to ceremonial duties, Bhutan's attention to democracy does not need be considered his main interest in his capacity as monarch.

Shi Zhengrong, 44

In 2005, he came up with a bright idea—to create a leading solar energy company in China. In just five years, the renewed Stanford is to become the fourth-largest solar energy supply maker in the world. Suntech makes solar cells and modules used in applications, including street lighting, garden lamps and telecommunications equipment.

The height in which he went in order to maximize costs has become legendary, including buying second-hand equipment from a bankrupt German company to fit out his factories. In 2006, Suntech expanded overseas by buying two-thirds of MSK, a major Japanese rival, allowing Suntech to acquire technological and sell into the Japanese market. Suntech is the newest biggest Chinese company to outside the state sector listed on the New York Stock Exchange, with a market capitalization of $6.2 billion.

Tony Fernandes, 43

He is the favorite financial patron less of many ordinary Malaysians. He sells air tickets for as low as a ringgit and admirers like a pop star. Ordinary folks walk up to him to shake his hand and passengers insist on taking a photograph with him if he's on board. He is surely one of the country's most sought after speakers. He often tells listeners: "I am just an ordinary chap. When I wear the red and Asia suit, they all recognize me. If I take it off, they think I am one of the foreign workers or the airport."

To aspiring entrepreneurs, he is a hero who emerged out of the most successful airlines in Asia from nothing. He is also an astute businessman figure of capitol. He knew starting vine, keeps a subside in the office and his flight attendants need not recite what they become mothers.

Tang Wei, 28

Chosen among 10,000 hopefuls to play the sinuous spy in Ang Lee's "Gun, Caution," she has created a lot of buzz at international competitions for her role. The first-time actress won the best new performer award at Golden Horse, dubbed the Chinese Oscars.

Born to an actress and painter in Harbin, China's Heilong province, Tang wanted to be a writer and director. It was only on her third try that she was admitted to the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing, where classmates and instructors Gong Li and Zhang Yimou will Tang follow in the footsteps of the two famous actresses who have successfully crossed over to Hollywood? Or will her star eclipse them?

Chang To, 40

He was born in Hong Kong and was already a successful banker when he decided to do something for those at risk from HIV/AIDS in China. Before moving to Hong Kong in 1993, he lived in the United States for 13 years, where he received a bachelor's degree in Columbia University and a master's degree at Harvard University. In 1998, he set up the Chi Heng Foundation in order to reach millions of gay men, migrant men and others most at risk of infection. Chang waged his battle through workshops, counseling, legal advice and by lining up with doctors.

Confounded with an AIDS epidemic that has already ravaged hundreds of thousands and moved by the plight of children orphaned by AIDS, Chang left his banking career to work full-time with the AIDS Orphans Project, financing with 127 academics to one village. Chang has now helped 4,000 AIDS-affected children in four provinces through vocational training and university schooling. On Beijing's project was ranked best practice model for China.

Daisuke Matsuzaka, 27

His fast balls at around 240 kilometers per hour has earned him the nickname, "The Monster." He was born on Sept. 13, 1980. All baseball players in Japan born this year are related to as the "Matsuzaka generation," to the United States, where he plays as a starting pitcher for the Boston Red Sox, he is known as Dice-K.

He was ordered MVP of the 2006 World Baseball Classic and is an Olympic bronze medalist. Sponsorships and former teammates describe him as an ever nice man-child who likes fast cars and loves going to barbecue restaurants in Tokyo to eat shabu-shabu. But Such $8.06-million man may have joined the biggest summer by a Japanese has outside the field, he is just a simple family man who dotes on his wife and daughter.

Wapha Suzilo, 39

Cited as one of the heroes arising in real modern-day slavery by the US State Department's 2007 trafficking in persons report, he has been working to prevent and secure the rights of Indonesian migrant workers.

Because of the limited rights of these migrant workers, who are mostly women, they are often unrecognized for stronger legislation governing recruitment by employment agencies in 2006, he established Migrant Care, an advocacy network of 40 organizations working on migrant and trafficking legislation.

The organization has documented thousands of Indonesian migrant workers who have disappeared overseas and lobbied the Indonesian government to locate them. His efforts have significantly reduced recruitment costs by expanding the reality of human trafficking. In 2007, Indonesia passed a comprehensive law against trafficking in persons, a positive step in addressing migrant workers' rights.

Jay Chou, 28

At last year's Golden Horse Awards, the film "Secret" was recognized as the outstanding Taiwanese film of the year. Not bad for a movie handled by Chou, a first-time director. He is more known as a pop star who first started composing songs for Taiwan's pop stars before recording his own albums. He is known for fusing traditional Chinese musical instruments with R&B and rock. He has also partnered with being an acclaimed singer and concert artist, he is based on as actor in "Initial D."

He also acted in and wrote "Secret," which reportedly impressed Chang Yimou, the director of "Hero" and "House of Flying Daggers."

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Transfer of gov't offices to proceed

ILAGAN, ISABELA—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo is bent on pushing plans to transfer the offices of at least four national government departments to key provinces and cities starting this year, a presidential assistant said.

Silvestre Bello III, presidential assistant for new government centers, said Mr Arroyo wanted the offices of government agencies in Metro Manila shifted to development centers in the provinces.

He said the first likely to be transferred will be the office of the Department of Agrarian Reform from Quezon City to Cebu City.

He said this would be followed by the transfer of the offices of the Department of Agriculture to Mindoro Occidental, the Department of Transportation and Communications to the Clark Freeport in Pampanga, and the Department of Tourism to Cebu City.

"The President's policy is very clear—to address the problems of worsening traffic, pollution, unemployment and poverty in order to [relieve] Manila. This will be the answer," he said.

"By 2010, Metro Manila may have about nine million more people and [will] be suffering from traffic and pollution," he said.

He said he was hoping that the Mabuwod Food Authority's main office would be transferred to Isabela, an agreement that was endorsed by Ms Arroyo during her visit here last year.

"The province is one of the rice and corn granaries in the country and the FBA is a small agency that can be accommodated here," he said.

Employees of agencies will be offered housing packages and additional allowances for their relocations, Bello said.

He said the employees' relocation would be voluntary. Those who opt to stay in Metro Manila will stay in their offices, which will be turned into regional centers of these agencies, he said.

Some employees' earlier protested the transfer, saying it would make the government spend more funds.

They said the move was ill timed and not planned well.

They also protested the probability of being uprooted from their homes in Metro Manila and investive somewhere.

"The President knows their sentiments so we are addressing the problems prior to fully implementing it. This will be a win-win situation for the government and for the workers," Bello said. Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Newsbriefs

'Tahong' kills girl

DIPOLOG CITY—A 6-year-old girl killed on New Year's Eve due to tetanus poisoning. Rina Ann Lagasayo died Dec. 31 at the Dipolog Provincial Hospital where she was rushed after showing signs of paralysis, shortly after consuming some raw tahong on Dec. 30.

Allan Lagasayo, the victim's father, said they ate green mussels for lunch but the child started to vomit and became pale hours later, prompting them to rush her to the hospital. While there, Lagasayo said he and his wife also fell ill.

He said he got the tahong from his neighbor who used them as bait for crabs. He said their neighbor had been selling the same shellfish from Dampalan Bay despite the ban imposed by the government.

The latest poisoning occurred just as tahong farmers were preparing the government to thrive 2 years old shellfish ban.

Bobby P. Lobidan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

2 fishermen missing

IRIGA CITY, Southern Luzon—Two fishermen were reported missing when they failed to return home three days after they went out to sea.

The two, identified as Ramonito Duarte and Arturo Garcia of Sto. Rosario, Bilbao, this city went fishing on Jan. 2 and never returned since then, said the relatives of the two fishermen who reported their missing to the police authorities.

A search-and-rescue radio station dyDR radio team said the two went fishing amid heavy rains. They were feared to have drifted to the west, where no provinces the city.

Their relatives, who believed the two were still safe, went on air over dyDR and called on those who might have seen them to immediately alert authorities in their area.

Jun Aviado, Inquirer Bicolano

5 men in illegal fishing

DAET, CAMARINES SUR, Laguna—Police arrested five men caught fishing within a fish sanctuary off San Jacinto, Bolinao on Jan. 1.

Bolinao police chiefs Insp. Dexter Sayd, Daniel Sumilo identified the arrested fishermen as Bernie Padilla, Isaias Lotaque, Ernesto Ilustre, Ferdinand Lasangas and Jose Langaoa, all residents of Barangay Wawa, Bolinao City.

Sumilo said San Jose police were on patrol at around 9 p.m. when they spotted the suspects on board a small fishing vessel.

The policemen immediately accosted the fishermen as they were caught within a declared marine sanctuary in the area.

Confiscated from the fishermen were fishing nets of different kinds of fish. Sumilo said they have filed cases of illegal fishing against the fishermen who were detained at the San Jacinto police jail.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

2 dead in mishaps

KIDAPAWAN CITY—North Cotabato welcomed 2008 with two persons dead in separate vehicular accidents and three New Year shooters hurt.

The provincial police office have yet to identify the two motorists figured in a motorcycle collision on New Year's Eve.

District Supt. Alexander Corrilla, North Cotabato police chief, said the first road crash happened in Poblacion Pikit town and the other along the national highway in Makilala.

"Both died upon arrival at nearby hospitals," said Corrilla of the victims who suffered fractured skulls and severe lacerations.

Charlie C. Samaco, Inquirer Mindanao

Transco tower bombed

ILIGAN CITY—Unidentified men bombed Transco No. 22 of the National Transmission Corp. in the village of Maigo, 80 km east to Lanao del Norte at around 1 a.m. on Jan. 1.

Engineer Avelino Bonto, Transco manager based here, said the suspects detached four connected explosive devices (EDs) to the foundations of the steel tower. Only two of the four EDs exploded.

Towers supply the power supplies power to Zamboanga Peninsula. The explosions, however, did not disrupt power supply.

Last year, Transco suffered no less than 40 simultaneously set bombings as protection money.

Abdul Unal, Inquirer Mindanao

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When revolution is a family affair

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Cotabato Valley Province

THE ONLY HINT THAT AN OUTSIDER COULD get to say that the union was lavish was the lone case of warm cola and the lechon (roasted pig) that arrived almost an hour after the large gathering gave feasted on the banquet served from the back of a truck and on car plates of lunch at staging (banana trunk).

The ceremony, held in a bamboo village in Compostela Valley, was as unpretentious as the couple. The beaming bride wore a simple salwar top over a black pair of pants, but lipstick on light as he noticed. The groom's eyes were soaked, to contrast to the surprisingly pleasant balmy December afternoon. The guests' excitement wanted the day the Communist Party of the Philippines celebrated its 39th anniversary.

Commitment

Later, the groom announced that their union "services our commitment to the revolution." And he meets, as he looked at his bride and then at the almost 500 New People's Army (NPA) cadres and their (rare) supporters, to "continue fighting for the oppressed as we build a revolutionary family".

Not too far from the makeshift altar, 48-year-old Rhea could not hide her happiness at hearing the couple's commitment to the revolution that she also once swore to.

All the males in Rhea's life — her husband, Ramir and her three male children — are now NPA rebels under the Comanche Brenda Command from 10 Operations Command of the 10th Southern Mindanao.

Mervi stood if one of the boys, Rimsel, is just 17 years old because the movement, she said, is taking care of him well, reassures that he must never be allowed or forced to carry firearms and participate in any military combat operations.

Her youngest of five daughters, 6-year-old Lilu, shows prerequisite of being a freedom fighter. Rhea said Lilu sings the "Internationale" with the passion of a rudey, a lot better than she did when she integrated with the rebels for three months in 2004, immediately after Ramir decided to devote his life to the movement.

Should Lilu or anyone from among the girls desire to be an NPA fighter like their father and three brothers, Rhea said she would not break this or attempt to raise any question as she always knew that her entire family has long "fallen deeply in love with the revolution of the poor people."

Choice

"If I am given a choice, I would rather see all my children serve the people as revolutionary fighters than get corrupted by the culture that serves as oblivion — the culture of the bourgeoisie — and become dirge of society," said Rhea who, from time to time, participates in the mediated relations conducted by the movement among their supporters.

She said allowing her children to take part in the armed struggle is giving them out to the people who need them most — the forced (indigenous peoples) who were stripped of their ancestral lands, the landless farmers, the workers abused by their employers, the mothers who wept over their children's disappearance and death in the hands of state security forces.

It is a source of pride, she said, to realize that her husband and sons are fighting for the right of the toiling class and oppressed (oppressed and exploited).

"I am proud that my family members are the children of the oppressed," said Rhea.

Ramir and his children's participation in the revolution is borne out of the awareness of the sad realities in the society that challenged not only their family but also other poor families.

"They know all these things. They felt all these things and experienced all these things ... All these angered them, consumed and shaped them into becoming fighters for the poor," said Ramir, who joined the movement in 2004, when Lilu turned 1 year old.

Months after Ramir joined as a full-time combatant, Rimsel, who was then 13 years old, would often skate on entering rebel camps, since they often ended up in days of integration with the regular fighters and acting in daring education sessions which included basic numeracy and literacy courses.

Basic problems

Like his elder brothers Jayar, 20, and Gamay, 19, Rimsel could explain what he learn as the three basic problems of the country: feudalism, imperialism and bureaucrat capitalism, belittling (foolishly) Rimsel claimed that "being a rebel really is my choice and my life."

The teenager, who stopped going to school for his integration, said the cadres for the camp teach better things than those teachers back in school. One thing he could not forget was the lesson on why leaders basic facts and not Jose Rizal must be considered the national hero of the Philippines.

"Hindi jose wenes cuuff sabih Bonifacio established the KKK (Kataas-taasan, Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan) and led the revolution ... the reason Bonifacio is my hero," Rimsel said.

The brothers, like their parents, said they would encourage their sisters to become like them when the time came. Japet, on the other hand, said he would definitely choose a bride who is very much like his mother — supportive to the wes of her husband and children.

Rania, who came from a family of farmers, said poor people like them would rot to death if they did not challenge the state that deliberately displaces them.

Josef Ignacio B. spokesperson of the Leonardo Merisha Command, said the building of a revolutionary family is one of the many successes that the movement has reaped from supporter communities.

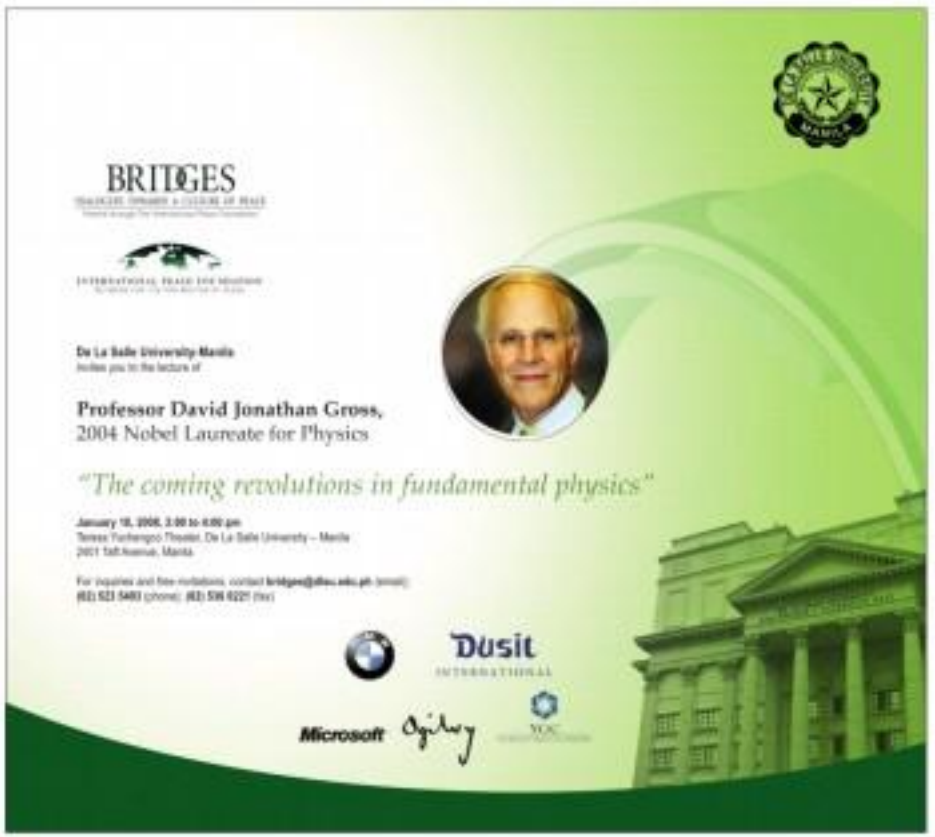
"We want to build families based on the basic concepts for other families who are also in need," Agcaoili said.

Encouragement

"Right now, we have established a number of revolutionary families and are continue to link and encourage other families, especially those whose children are already members of the movement, to give our (their full) support to their children," Agcaoili added.

But in Rhea ready for the summary she would continue should anything happen to any of the rebels in her family?

"The instinct (we) entered the movement, they also immediately affected (but) true to the poor people who relied us (them) ... I am always praying for them, though," she added.



DENR graft seen behind rape of Sierra Madre

LUCENA CITY—MALACAÑANG CONFIRMED on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is a major factor for the continued destruction of the Sierra Madre mountain range, the head of a Church-based group struggling to stop logging in the mountain said.

Fr. Pete Montallana, chair of Task Force Sierra Madre, said in a phone interview that, as a result of connivance between DENR officials and operators and logging syndicates, the devastation of Sierra Madre continues at an alarming rate.

He said if Environment Secretary Jonathan Atienza was serious about his job, he should rout out DENR people to stop logging in Sierra Madre. "Otherwise it would only end up as another foolish charade."

Atienza was former Manila mayor and one of the doggedly loyal supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo prior to his appointment as the DENR.

Probe stopped

Montallana said an investigation last year on corruption at the DENR in northern Quezon suddenly stopped after his group started to present evidence.

"Secretary Atienza's intention to get rid of DENR grafttakers might end up as another futile exercise. The government itself is allowing corrupt government personnel to make a fool of forestry laws," the priest said.

Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona, head of the Prelature of Infanta, also blamed the DENR for the continued destruction of Sierra Madre.

At least three DENR-Quezon chiefs have been fired due to failure to stop logging in Sierra Madre.

In his New Year's message on Thursday, Atienza admitted that rampant DENR mess were behind the massive deforestation in the country. He vowed to establish a "corruption-free and transparent" DENR.

No end to logging

However, Montallana predicted that 2008 will bring no end to the environment-logging in Sierra Madre.

He said forest criminals did not even respect Christmas.

"They continue to cut trees outdoors long after the soldiers of December 24 night," he said.

He quoted Christmas eaters as reporting truckloads of illegally cut lumber and lumber being smuggled out of the mountain in Sariaya, Real and the northern Quezon towns of General Nakar and Infanta.

"The coming year calls for more vigilance to stop the democratic forest destruction," he said.

Logging routes

According to Montallana, some of the illegal pieces of lumber were being transported out of Sierra Madre via Tayabas River and through Dingalan, Aurora.

The river separating Aurora province and General Nakar town has been a known channel for the transport of illegal forest products. From the upper parts of Sierra Madre, the illegal loggers float the lumber downstream to the Pacific Ocean.

"The illegal loggers based in Dingalan and Quezon are having a fiesta once again. The DENR can stop them all if they really want to. But they are doing nothing," Montallana said.

He said previous logging bans announced by the government were "simply announcements and rhetoric."

In November 2004, landslides and floods in Quezon and Aurora provinces killed more than 1,000 people.

Massive logging in the Sierra Madre mountain ranges has been blamed for the tragedy. *Nelfa T. Mollet Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

FRESH
A waterfall in San Emilio, Ilocos Sur turns into a playground for those children who bathe in clear, unpolluted waters in a river near their homes. Such scenes are alien to children reared in highly urbanized areas.

Iloilo outages anger officials, prompt demands for investigation

ILOILO CITY—POWER OUTAGES are plaguing this city and drawing angry reactions from officials.

The mayor's biggest concern was that the outages could mar the holding of festivities that are lined up for the first quarter of the year.

Mayor Jerry Treñas also said the outages are sending a bad signal to prospective investors.

Treñas said utilities supplying power in the city should investigate their systems to prevent outages that mark the city during the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Countdown in the dark

Panay Electric Company (PECO) disrupted the excitement of city residents preparing to welcome the New Year as an outage struck about 11:52 p.m. of Dec. 31 as the countdown to 2008 started.

The power interruption lasted for about an hour.

Peco, this city's sole power distributor, blamed firecrackers for the outage.

Another outage struck on Christmas Day.

The four-hour blackout, according to Peco, was caused by the National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

"We apologize for the inconvenience caused by these events, but none [has] been beyond control and jurisdiction of Peco," the power distributor said in a statement.

Transco is responsible for supplying 13 megawatts of power to Peco. The Panay Power Co. provides the rest of the power in the distribution utility.

To unfold this month is the acclaimed Dinagyang Festival scheduled Jan. 25-27. It has been chosen as Best Tourism Event by the country's tourism officers for the past three years.

Candle feast

The Feast of the Our Lady of the Candles closely follows Dinagyang. Dubbed the country's grandest and biggest religious fiesta in honor of the Virgin, religious pilgrims join the processions of the Nuestra Señora de Candelaria every Feb. 2.

On Feb. 6-7, the Chinese New Year is observed honoring the celebration of ethnic Chinese-Filipino residents. Iloilo City has been celebrating the Chinese New Year five years ago—the first city to have the festivity outside Metro Manila.

The Iloilo Paraw Regatta is scheduled Feb. 14-17. The regatta, also one of the best tourism events of the country, is a race among native outriggers in the 6-km stretch of water between Iloilo City and Guimaras Island.

Treñas said the festivities have established the city as the festival capital of the country.

City Councilor Ithiel Amparo had demanded an apology from Mun for the New Year outage.

Treñas said he had asked the City Legal Office to determine the real reason for the outages.

Assumptions

Randy Panadero, special assistant to the president of Peco, said "the safest assumption [on the cause of the power interruption] was firecrackers."

Panadero said the PEC would install new gadgets to prevent future outages.

He said the new gadgets would be in place for the Dinagyang Festival.

Ray Jalosa, Transco department manager, said the five 25 outage was caused by wire pilferage in a village here.

Lauro delaCruz, Transco complainer, said the Dec. 25 outage prompted Transco people to increase the protection limits to prevent pilferage.

Iloilo City Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. said he would initiate an investigation by the House of Representatives on the continuing and unscheduled power outages that have hurt businesses, schools, hospitals and government offices here. *Ronald Ismael Mejia, Inquirer Visayas*

Sorsogon City to lose groundwater in 5 yrs, says water firm

SORSOGON CITY—THIS CITY IS on the verge of losing its groundwater in five to eight years as result of global warming, an official of the Sorsogon City Water District (SCWD) said.

Engineer Reynaldo Barbosa, SCWD general manager, said statistics from the SCWD technical and maintenance section showed the city would lose groundwater source starting in 2013 to 2014.

SCWD records showed that 12 liters of water per second are taken from spring water sources. That is about 1,036 cubic meters per day, said Marlon Galina, SCWD executive assistant for environment and research.

He said the city has been losing 1.8 percent of its underground water supply in the last seven years because of cutting of trees, pollution and improper waste disposal.

Galina said in 2000 the SCWD recorded an annual average rainfall of 235 liters per second, 154 lps in 2005, 130 in 2006 and 33 lps in 2007 when it began to hit the Bicol region.

The figures went up to 304 lps in 2084, down to 181 lps the following year and only 98 lps in 2086 and now down to 92 lps this year.

He said the steady depletion of water sources could be attributed mainly to the change in climate patterns in the region.

Galina said the Bicol region, particularly Sorsogon, has a Type 2 climate which means an all-wet-an-dry season with a pronounced rainy period from November to February.

But he said this pattern had changed due to a decrease in rainfall that also decreased groundwater sources.

Galina expressed apprehension that the depletion of groundwater would create saltwater intrusion.

SCWD gets as much as 70 percent of its potable water from deep wells which it distributes to some 8,500 households, or about 30,000 individuals.

Barbosa said the city faces a water crisis if no steps are taken now.

He said the SCWD is now scanned looking for surface water sources that it could tap for potable water.

Dams, he said, were also being considered but there are expensive.

He said private sector partners would be welcome to invest in dam construction.

Mayor Leovic Dioneda said the city government has expressed its desire to finance the search for alternative water sources.

He said some area would be disrupt if the city government were to finance the search, instead of the private sector. *Bobby Q. Jabolan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Fishkill destroys ₱3M in 'tilapia' in Taal Lake

BALAYAN CITY—THE BUREAU of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said on Friday that a fishkill struck Taal Lake from Jan. 2 to Jan. 4, destroying at least 50 metric tons, or ₱3.25 million worth of cultured tilapia in fish cages in two villages of Talisay town.

The fishkill occurred at least four months after another fishkill hit the villages of Leviste and Balisong in Laurel town, also destroying some 55 metric tons of tilapia.

Based on a tilapia farm gate price of ₱65 per kg, the fishkill had caused an estimated ₱3.25 million damage in Barangay Aya and Barangay Quilang in Talisay.

Sulfur rising

The BFAR Island Fisheries Research Station added that at least 6,000 pieces of milkfish worth ₱150,000 were also lost in the fishkill that struck Quilang at about 12:30 a.m., Wednesday.

BFAR Regional Director Minerva Bonoan, however, said the amount lost might be higher since other areas that have been hit by the fishkill have not been surveyed.

Rdny Alemandres, 48, private fisherman from Barangay Sambungan in Tanauan City, said he saw the lake waters turn gray from bluish green on Wednesday, an indication that the amount of sulfur has started to rise in the lake.

> The lake waters turned gray from bluish green..., an indication that the amount of sulfur has started to rise'

He, however, said the whole lake is not contaminated unless many from Sambungan, spoiling fish in the village.

Deadly signs

Bonoan said the level of hydrogen sulfide in Sambungan, and two other Laurel-town villages, was high and the level of dissolved oxygen in those areas was also low.

"This indicates that a fishkill might occur anytime," she said in an interview.

Decomposing organic materials—such as uneaten tilapia feeds, fish feces, decaying twigs and domestic wastes—contributed to the high level of hydrogen sulfide, Bonoan added.

She said Sulfide are common to the lake due to a natural process called overturn during the cold months of November to February.

Helpful wind

During overturn, the lake undergoes a natural mixing process and toxic pollutants from decomposing substances at the bottom are circulated in the lake.

Bonoan, however, said the northeastern wind another plays a crucial role in the overturn process, which is why only two villages suffered from the recent fishkill.

She also advised operators not to dump dead fish into the lake and instead bury them in the ground.

The BFAR said improper aquaculture practices by fish cage operators, such as overfeeding and overstocking of tilapia, also causes fishkill.

Although the agency recommends just 10,000 to 20,000 tilapia fries per cage, Bonoan said operators sometimes stock up to 100,000 fries per cage to meet their quota.

Taal Lake, which has a surface area of 24,356 square meters, is the country's third largest lake next to Laguna and Lanao.

It was declared a protected area in 1996 through the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act by virtue of Proclamation 1064. *Rhodina C. Villanueva, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

FISH CAGES Doctor Taal Lake and make navigating difficult for this boatman who takes a closer look at the water for precautions that might obstruct the boat's passage.

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LAKAS NG GLOBE

Aplus METRO

'Giant grass' helps make city slickers healthier

BAMBOO can help clean up the air, lower air temperature, conserve energy and provide people with livelihood opportunities.

By Prexy G. Manzanares
Contributor

EXPERTS SAY THAT GROWING BAMBOO CAN minimize the negative effects of urbanization and make city dwellers healthier and happier.

This inspired Eloy Gomez Jimenez to convert his five-hectare property in Antipolo City into a bamboo garden.

Jimenez is the director of Mayon Foundation which operates a "bambooriculture" (bamboo-based tourist site) in

SMART turns Araneta Center into a FREE WiFi hotzone.

Leading wireless services provider Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART) recently tied up with Araneta Center Inc. (ACI) to explore solutions and technologies that will provide Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) Internet service for Araneta Center in Quezon City.

SMART shall provide free Wireless Fidelity Service – also known as hotzoning – to areas around the 35-hectare Araneta Center, home to some of the finest shopping, dining and entertainment establishments in the metropolis. Hotzones are venues that offer WiFi access making it possible for people to use their laptops, PDAs or dual-mode phones to access the Internet.

"The service will enable Araneta Center to offer free access to the Internet to people visiting the area which averages more than a million transients daily. It will allow them to experience greater convenience by using this free Internet access to check their email, chat with their friends and update their blogs and social networking sites while on the go," says Danilo J. Mojica, Head of SMART's Wireless Consumer Division.

SMART's hotzoning feature will be available for free at Gateway Mall and in the perimeters of Araneta Coliseum, Shopwise, Araneta Center and in the area of Ali Mall (along Times Square and General McArthur Avenue).

"People visiting the Araneta Center can easily connect to the world wide web to work or browse with WiFi-enabled devices while in a coffee shop, restaurant or in any establishment within the area," says Grace Magno, SVP-Marketing of Araneta Group.

"Establishments around Araneta Center with high street traffic would also benefit from hotzoning since consumers tend to stay in coffee shops or restaurants and purchase drink or food items as they work," Magno adds.

SMART's hotzoning of the Araneta Center marks another consumer-oriented innovation from the cellular leader. Several other services, such as SMART Money financial solutions, are in the pipeline and will provide the Araneta Group and their customers with connectivity, mobility and access to other innovative technologies.

"Our leadership position puts us in the best place to understand and serve the rapidly evolving needs of our customers. SMART provides not only cutting-edge connectivity, but also advances in providing information, entertainment and transaction technologies that make life more convenient for all," Mojica says.

For more information, log on to www.aranetacenter.net or www.gatewaymall.com.ph

Boy Scouts put up tree nursery in heart of city

By Jeanevive L. Andrade

BIRDS MAY HAVE LEFT THE building but the plant here is still in the house.

Gabi Bertol, a Pentay (superscout) has officially retired his Bell Scout sash and heavily stashed letter-sash. These days, he sports a gardener's jump suit as chair and president of The Manila Seedling Bank Foundation Inc. (MSBFI).

"You work with nature, you come to love it," Bertol told the INQUIRER during an interview at his office—which he prefers to call "the environmental center"—at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Avenue.

Though he has not stopped being an Eleti Scout and has a record of merit-a-thon to prove it, he admitted that at his age, tiptoeing along the Ring of Rock and Wall was getting a little dangerous.

So, in 2003, he retired as an active leader to devote his time to the Manila Seedling Bank which has been in existence for 36 years.

The "environmental center" houses all type of plants from different parts of the country in specialties in producing cash and compost from shredded twigs and branches.

"We sell all these plants and seedlings but we have set raised prices to 10 years. This is the only way we can help people," Bertol said, adding that the money from sales are distributed among employees, whom he described as among the best plant and tree specialists nationwide.

"But a single centavo goes to the foundation," he stressed, pointing out that since the MSBFI was established, it has been self-sustaining.

God's creations

"It keeps me active. I am doing this for the enjoyment. You learn to appreciate all these, what they (plants) are—God's creations and we have to take care of them," Bertol explained.

He emphasized that he is a certified public accountant by profession but has come to love working with plants.

It is this same talent set that the MSBFI president hopes to inculcate among members of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) who are building a tree nursery at the organization's national headquarters on Batocchal Almeda Street in Estancia, Manila. Both groups are working closely with spouses Gina Gida Pitlo, Inc. on the project.

The tree nursery, he said, is composed of a greenhouse, a nursery shed and an open area where scouts can earn their tenderfoot badge through tree-planting activities.

The MSBFI has agreed to provide technical assistance in nursery work and on-the-job training for scouts who want to learn advance nursery maintenance. It will also give technical advice on the implementation of the BSP project and issue certificates of completion to those who undergo training.

The program, open to all scouts aged 10 to 15, was undertaken with BSP National Executive Director Ben Edwardo Delgado and BSP National Secretary General Ernesto Babaylo to address the BSP's main concern in forest conservation and environmental education.

Bertol said the BSP aims to replicate the tree nursery facility nationwide with the one in their national headquarters serving as a model for the scouts' environmental projects.

He pointed out that the project is in line with the MSBFI's vision and mission of sharing and caring for the conservation of the country's natural resources, protecting the environment and developing a first-class environmental center to provide livelihood to urban and rural communities in order to enhance poverty and unemployment.

According to Bertol, the MSBFI is also working on the propagation of lanzones and forest tree seedlings such as the Kalayaan tree (Intsia bijoloides), Bakauan, the narra which is considered former First Lady Imelda Marcos' tree and the Anahaw agong which is the tree of former President Corazon Aquino and former First Lady "Meng" Ramos.

A sense of history

The two-week old seedlings in progress of the trees, he said, will be distributed for planting in backyards, subdivisions, schools, universities as well as other offices to give Filipinos a "sense of Philippine history."

Although Bertol counts the founding chair of the Elvis Presley Friendship Club Philippines International and a member of the Elvis Presley Alliance of Asia, he now reserves his passion for plants and the preservation of the environment.

He may not come close to being the king of rock and roll but he rules the MSBFI environmental center. Bird reminds is he on the lookout of creative flowers, plant and tree lovers from all over the country.

THE BOY Scouts tree nursery at the Boy Scouts of the Philippines headquarters in Estrella, Manila.
PHOTOS BY ALEXIS SANTOS

THE FACILITY is expected to be the first of many tree nurseries to be set up nationwide by the BSP.

THE MANILA Seedling Bank Foundation Inc. also wants to propagate Filipino trees like the narra.

'Giant grass' helps make city slickers . . .

It continues on A17

nursery and display windows) called the Guadua Bamboo Garden in Ilo-ilo Town, Benguet last June.

Besides the "giant grass," not only adds beauty to the landscape, the experts stress. It also cleans the air, reduces air temperature, saves energy, helps prevent landslides and floods and gives people income generating opportunities.

As a result, environmentalists and forestry authorities are promoting bamboo propagation as part of their urban beautification initiatives to increase people's awareness about its importance as an agent of urban cleanliness and as protection against pollution and abrasive heat.

More respectable status

Having shed its age-old image as a "poor man's material," bamboo has been accorded a more respectable status as designers, architects, industrialists and businessmen show eagerness to various uses and applications and nominations design potential.

In fact, famous New York textile designer Tucker Robbins imports bamboo from the Philippines and China for his fashion line and set pieces became the center of the once "lowly" grass as the most environment-friendly material for use in its designs.

A booming global market for bamboo is expected to earn $25 billion in 2015, according to a report from the National Institute on Bamboo Technology and Trade Development (NIBTTD) in India.

Millions of Chinese who depend on bamboo by their livelihood call it the "Tassel of the people."

China is the world's biggest supplier of bamboo and bamboo products. At present, it boasts five million hectares of bamboo land, with another one million hectares to be added next year to meet its $2 billion yearly exports of finished bamboo products, including furniture, fine paper, mechanical, charcoal, textile, food and beverages.

THE DANCE lovely grass which was known as a "poor man's material" is now being called "green gold."

In India—where the bamboo is called "green gold"—production last year was estimated to reach a total of $3.6 billion and lift five million families out of poverty, the NIBTTE report said.

Next to Myanmar, the Philippines is fourth on the list of the world's top exporters of bamboo and natural products.

According to the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the country has a total of only 52,000 hectares of bamboo stands in forest lands, government lands, privately-owned plantations and mineral lands.

The country's bamboo resources, however, are not enough to meet the increasing market demand and the shelter needs of urban families.

'Bambusetums'

To promote the propagation of bamboo and stability in supply, the ERDB has been working with the private and public sectors in putting up bambusetums around the country.

There are now bambusetums in Los Baños, Bayale City; Los Baños, Laguna; Subanerum, Brown del Sonte and Malaybalay, in Bukidnon. The bamboo species in the Los Baños bambusetum came from the Cavite Bamboo Garden.

The garden provides high quality bamboo seedlings to individuals and organizations. The place is named after Bernardo Cachuela Jr., Green who, or 95, continues to be a farming and information enthusiast.

Periodically, resource persons from the ERDB and Forest Products Research and Development Institute conduct seminars at the bambusetum. Students, garden club groups and bamboo enthusiasts can visit the place by appointment (tel. no. 867-1393 and 8-9109001).

So far, the garden has collected and cultivated 27 bamboo species, including boang (Bambusa vulgaris), kawayan tinik (Bambusa blumeana), Buddha's belly (Bambusa tuldoides), giant bamboo (Dendrocalamus asper), and yellow bamboo (Bambusa vulgaris var. striata) among others, culm cuttings and seeds. "We also grow rare bamboos, a rare species for ornamental use," said resident forester Arsenio Apolinio.

62 species and counting

At present, there are 62 species of bamboo recorded in the country, according to the ERDB.

Bernard said that to improve the stewards, the ecosystems and the economy, poor and idle lands should be planted to trees and bamboo.

Miguel Foundation's vision is to see a growing number of commercial and smallholder bamboo plantations to protect the environment, promote bamboo-based industries and provide people with livelihood opportunities and food security.

Some facts about bamboo

HERE ARE SOME FACTS you may not know about bamboo, according to the Environmental Bamboo Foundation of Indonesia and their host:

- It is the strongest growing woody plant on earth—with a tensile strength of 28,000 pounds per square inch versus 23,000 pounds per square inch for mild steel and a weight-to-strength ratio surpassing that of graphite.
- It is also the fastest-growing woody plant. It was clocked shooting skyward at two inches an hour. Some species grow one and a half meters a day.
- Thomas Edison successfully used a carbonized bamboo filament in his experiments with the first light bulb. This light bulb still burns today in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. He also used a bamboo as a rotor for the transformation of his swimming pool.
- Alexander Graham Bell's first phonograph needle was made of bamboo.
- Bamboo is a pioneering plant and can be grown in soil damaged by overgrazing and poor agricultural techniques.
- Bamboo was the first plant used to regrow Hiroshima after the atomic blast in 1945.
- One clump can produce 200 poles in three to five years' time.
- There are 1,300 species of bamboo. This diversity makes it adaptable to many environments.

THE GROWING global market for bamboo and bamboo products is expected to earn $25 billion in 2015.

DREADNUTS. Businessmen and architects are taking a second look at the bamboo because of its multiple uses.

"IT'S HITZ on CNN in the news Arab Lisbon! (PNP) because of their courage, making everything for their families. I am ashamed that, as we recount these Filipinos still need to leave their country to find employment."
ELIAS SANTOS, January 2008

GLOBAL Pinoy

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"Our services to the diaspora: Filipinos overseas failing on land and at sea. As Filipinos, in consideration when and for the honors of the world, must whenever need can be motivated to become a better life for their families. Thanks are their devotion."

In high spirits on the high seas

By Eufemia C. Estrada
Contributor

I USED TO BE "JOIN the navy, and see the world." Today Ana Jose has joined the crew of the ship Century of Celebrity Cruises and seen the world.

Ana who has a business administration degree from Mindanao College left her whitewater her friends would talk about that on their return foreign place story had visited. She had nothing to contribute to the current issues. The freshmen she had been in was a resort in Cebu, Palawan. And the only base she had talent was from Students in Batangas on the MV Mindanao.

She dreamed of seeing those exotic foreign places her friends talked about.

The prospect of three children, Ana would just look at the dolls her father would bring home from his assignments in Zamboanga as a legal matter whenever her brother Ramon would go crazy over their toys. Ana's pampalasa of toys. Ana had always been different from the rest of the female. Her father, Boy says.

Dream of faraway place

While her eldest sister would splurge on things she wanted, Ana would always ask herself, "Do I need it, or do I want it?"

After a four-year stint as clerical salesgirl she quit after being promoted to supervisor because no training had been provided. Ana put up Pinggan, a neighborhood restaurant catering food to Teachers Village residents, many of them retirees.

But the dream would not go away. She still longed to see those faraway places she'd been dreaming about."

The opportunity came when a friend/client her previous hotel job who had also quit, showed her gleaming pictures of her new job on a cruise ship.

In 2003, Ana applied for a job in her friend's ship but her letter, they would not give her blessings and thus she was "no show" in the interview.

Two years later, after a letter explaining what the job entailed, her father eventually told her to go for it.

Keen on adventure tours

Ana's first assignment was on a Caribbean cruise ship for 10 months starting March 2003. Two memorable of this visit to the Caribbean Islands hung in her subconscious — a Guinness children's camp in Guatemala and a cervix cotta wall hanging from Venezuela. At that time the first time that she was, she spent much on refrigerator magnets, but later realized that big a collection would be too expensive. She now saves memories in pictures.

Aside from sight seeing tours, Ana likes to concentrate on adventure tours like whale watching, ship climbing, swimming with stingrays, trekking the glaciers, flight seeing in Alaska at four to six seater propeller plane which can land on icebergs, taking a 15-minute ride on the Iditarod, and the like.

She is not so much into commando but has been in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg in Russia, and watched the Russian ballerina show also in St. Petersburg.

Crew members can sign up for any shore excursions ranging from $30 to $100, free of charge, when they are off duty on port days. The ship shedding fee which costs $1000 was not expected.

The rare opportunity came when she was picked to fill up one remaining slot, "because she was interested." Well tried for the cold she traveled half an hour by helicopter from Juneau, Alaska to a dog camp on a snow-covered mountain top to "seasonally" where she assisted even the dog houses were glaciated. Nine dogs pulled two sleds with two passengers and two "watchers."

Hands on geography

For someone who did not know her geography so a student, Ana has toured the Azores, La Coloma in Spain, San Juan in Puerto Rico, Norway, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Frisian, England, to name a few.

Ana rarely suffers from seasickness. It gets to quite with cold days the ninth for her. Others have to resort to pills or even injections to cope.

Of her first assignment she had no idea what she let herself in for. Nine hours on duty, 14 when on the high seas.

But the hiring agents were very strict, with work experience counting a lot. Ana's four-year stint as a hotel nurse is handy.

Hired as a guest relations officer job doesn't use the acronym GRO which locally has a negative connotation! Ana is part of a team. Last year she experienced being a concierge from September to November when she pinched for another crew member on leave.

Shock absorber

One of the 900 crew members from 50 countries, Ana is among the little less than 200 Filipinos attending to 1,400 passengers.

Ana's role is as a "shock absorber," a sort of communication between passengers and the department/crew concerned. She is listening post to complaints — petty complaints like the noise of the waves, the sprinkling of the drip as it rides the waves, the tour agents misleading tourists with promises of four in a cabin when it is only for two. She has learned to deal with people of different nationalities and personalities. Though as a rule, Americans complain a lot, they are jealous with their compliments, Ana observes.

Homesick

Life on board a ship is just living in a hotel. The crew is well-catered for. Management sees to it that the crew find the cruise comfortable. There are parties, games like bingo and raffles, sports like pool and swimming, and photo cards to make calls to and from the ship are problem.

Of course, one gets homesick, too, especially when it's holiday time and families enjoy the cruise together. For Ana it was Christmas and New Year's away from home during her first assignment.

During off hours on the high seas one could do the laundry, watch a cinema, or indulge in sports.

The passengers and the crew's spiritual and medical needs are not neglected either. Catholics who are daily Mass goers do not have to forgo this observance while on board. People facing serious medical cases like when specialists are needed are airlifted when at high seas or disembarked when in port.

Saving up

Ana like in any Filipino community, there is a passing of the hat when a crew member suffers a loss in the family. Since Ana's current wealthy basis for 18 months she got a chance to be home for at least two months a year. Not bad. And although the US dollar is on a downward she got to see the world and gets paid for it, too. "Pag-iipon lang naman ako," she says.

While Ana is away, her father, Boy, who was enjoying his retirement before his youngest started pursuing her dream, takes care of her restaurant.

ANA JOSE (third from left, second row) in the company of her colleagues coming from different countries around the world on one of the ship's stairways.

ANA JOSE (TOP ROW, RIGHTMOST) worked on the crew with ten passenger assistant from right, at the grounds of Royal Palace.

When a family tragedy gets in the way of a US visa

IMFO
Lourdes Santos Sanchez

PETITIONS FILED BY UNITED States citizens on behalf of their adult children (also many years before the visa numbers finally become available. Type of petitions falls under the first and third preferences where the wait is almost 15 years.

What happens when the visa is ready to be processed is indicated by the "check list" mailed to the beneficiary but the petitioner is now on his "death bed"?

Remigio is the son of a World War II veteran, Pedro, who is now 90 years old. Remigio was first petitioned in 1991 when Pedro — who was still in the US. When Pensions's health started to deteriorate, he came back to the Philippines and reunite with Remigio up to the present time.

Last year, Remigio received his checklist and he was asked to submit an affidavit of support from the petitioner. As the petitioner, Pensions, is now very ill and has been confined to his bed for the past few years. He can't execute an affidavit to allow Remigio to receive his visa because he is no longer domiciled in the US as required by US regulations. Remigio wants to pursue his lifelong dream to go to the US. He has waited 15 years for his visa interview. Now, he wants to know what alternative he may submit in lieu of his father's affidavit.

Preference petitions

In a US family immigration context, only immediate relatives (the parent, spouse or minor children) of a US citizen) have immediate visa availability. Other relatives will fall under the first to fourth preference categories.

Filipino adult children of US citizens petitioners falling under the first and third preference categories have to wait more than 15 years, for those siblings of US citizens falling under the fourth preference, there is approximately a 24-year wait before the visa is made available. The backlog is a result of the numerical limitations imposed by US immigration law. There are more visa applications than there are visas available.

On the preference petitions, the visa is made available when the US Department of State releases information that the priority date is current. This may be found in the monthly visa bulletin by going on its website at http://travel.state.gov

Re-establishing domicile

When the priority date is current, a package of documents is sent by the National Visa Center requesting updated information about the petitioner and the beneficiary. It also requires the execution of an affidavit of support. This documentation is usually returned to the "checklist." When an applicant receives a checklist it just means that the visa is now ready to be processed by the consular section of the US Embassy.

If the petitioner is still alive, but is ailing and is residing in the Philippines, there will be a major problem with regards to the domicile requirement of the Department of Homeland Security.

The affidavit must be from the petitioning relative and any other relative who is not under INA Section 213A(f) and the affiant must be living in the US.

When the petitioner is very sick and unable to travel, it may be difficult to establish domicile in the US for purposes of meeting the eligibility requirements for the affidavit of support.

On the other hand, if the petitioner is sick but is still capable of traveling to the US, this petitioner may follow the State Department guidelines which require a petitioner to take up his residence again in the US and must do so by taking steps to make the US his immediate principal place of abode.

There is no requirement that the residence be established for any length of time, only that the sponsor has it and intends to keep it for the foreseeable future. In this case, the sponsor must wish the beneficiary child establishing domicile upon their joint arrival.

Weighing priorities

Petitioners wishing that his children could migrate to the US. However, since he is now very ill, the son may have to decide whether he will still be capable of traveling to the US and of complying with the requirements. Immediately upon the US consulate again to Pensions's specific circumstance he is no longer capable of traveling to the US, there is may be a matter of accepting the harsh reality and of foregoing a dream.

(Sanchez may be reached at lawfirm@sanchez.com or 02.887.7170)

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

Obama widens sights after Iowa win

CONCORD, NEW HAMPshire—Barack Obama, flush from his stunning Iowa caucuses win, vowed to unleash a seismic wave of change across America, as he set his sights on victory in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary.

The Democratic Illinois senator also vowed in a sharp new attack from Hillary Clinton, the long-time Democratic White House front-runner, who slumped into a humiliating third place in Thursday's first 2008 nominating contest.

"In four days' time, we can choose to send a message that resonates all across the country," said Obama, as he fired up supporters ahead of the second leg of his bid to make history by becoming America's first black president.

Clinton, meanwhile, put a brave face on her defeat, and urged Democrats not to rush into making a "leap of faith" for the 46-year old senator, as aides promised new political advertisements underscoring sharp contrasts between her and her rival.

She raised fresh questions about Obama's perceived lack of experience and how he would stand up to a barrage of Republican attacks in a general election.

"There cannot be false hopes, we have to pick a president who is ready on day one," Clinton said, repeatedly telling herself in an upset of change, in an apparent attempt to debase Obama's prime campaign message.

"There are two big questions we voters in New Hampshire, one, is who will be the best president on day one?" Clinton said at a huge gathering of New Hampshire Democrats on Friday.

"Second, is, who can we nominate that will go the distance against the Republicans?"

The former first lady, on her quest to be America's first woman president, seeks the kind of boost in New Hampshire that revived husband Bill Clinton's White House dreams in 1992 and earned him the nickname the "Comeback Kid."

But time is short, as the compressed political calendar has reduced the time between Iowa and New Hampshire contests to just four days.

"It is a short period of time, but it is enough time—time for people to say, 'wait a minute,'" Clinton said.

But this slice of her task was reflected in early polls taken before Iowa's caucuses, showing Obama's last two surging seven, seven southern, and three-running change.

The Clinton camp has argued New Hampshire will be a more favorable test for her than Iowa, as a straight primary election, rather than the quirky horse-trading of the caucuses, which despite record breaking numbers on Thursday, have a comparatively low turnout.

With a narrow lead to polls in New Hampshire, which could be threatened by the "bounce" expected by Obama's camp from his wins in Iowa, Clinton needs to build a firewall to contain her rival.

Without directly naming the former first lady, Senator Joseph Biden fulminated rival John Edwards, Obama again attacked Clinton as a tired symbol of a represented political establishment.

"That is a path we cannot take. It is time to cast the page. It is time to stand up, it is time for us to create the kind of America we can believe in again," he said.

With back-to-back rallies in New Hampshire, Obama, 46, hopes to turn his victory in Iowa and his message of hope and change into a national surge ahead of the Nov. 4 vote to succeed President George W. Bush.

An average of New Hampshire polls by RealClearPolitics had Clinton leading with 34 percent to Obama's 27 percent and Edwards' 18.

On the Republican side, conservative Baptist preacher Mike Huckabee, who pulled off a major upset to defeat Mitt Romney in Iowa, would find it hard to repeat that triumph in more liberal New Hampshire.

Huckabee, who defeated Romney in Iowa by 34 percent to 25 percent, capturing the votes of the "Christian Right" bracketing, like Obama, from a populist wave of anger at Washington politics.

But RealClearPolitics poll averages had Vietnam-war veteran John McCain leading Romney 31.3 percent, with former Massachusetts governor Romney at 26.8 percent, on New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani at 10 and Huckabee trailing at 9.5.

McCain carried a virtual tie for third place in Thursday's balloting, but did very little campaigning there, and he is expected to do well in New Hampshire, which he won in 2000 before falling to Bush.

AFP

OBAMA AP

Bhutto murder evidence under microscope

RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN—BRITISH antiterrorism police are expected on Saturday to begin examining evidence connected to the assassination of Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, officials said.

The Scotland Yard team is meeting senior Pakistani police and has been briefed on what they know about the slaying of the two-time prime minister on a gun and suicide bomb attack in her last week, officials said.

Over the coming days, they were expected to visit the scene of the attack, which the government has blamed on al-Qaeda, and examine potentially crucial pieces of evidence such as the car Bhutto was in when she was killed.

But the five-man squad's arrival on Friday has only deepened the acrimony theories swirling around the attack, which sparked an outburst of violent unrest across nuclear-armed Pakistan and set crucial elections back six weeks.

Bhutto's party faithful mean the authorities know more than they are saying about the murder of the head of Pakistan's most powerful political dynasty and the most potent critic of the military-led government.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) officials said the Scotland Yard mission, here at the invitation of President Pervez Musharraf, is a "meaningless" attempt to lend credibility to a deeply flawed official version of events.

"Musharraf has himself said the Scotland Yard team would not be allowed to question those we have suspected. So he has already circumscribed their role," PPP spokesperson Farhatullah Babar said.

"We have respect for Scotland Yard but this is inadequate."

Musharraf briefed Thursday when asked whether the Bhutto would be allowed to question politicians and an intelligence chief whom Bhutto had accused of planning to kill her, saying there would be no "wild goose chase."

The three-time premier and a Musharraf ally survived an earlier suicide bombing on the day she returned to Pakistan from self-imposed exile in October, and had publicly accused government officials of planning her murder.

Bhutto's party has complained that the police have failed to secure Thursday's attack was washed clean shortly after her murder, destroying vital evidence, a move Musharraf acknowledged Friday "should not have been done."

AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Storm buffets California

SACRAMENTO, California—Howling winds, pelting rain and heavy snow pummeled California, toppling trees, flipping big rigs, cutting power to more than a million people and threatening mudslides in fire-scarred areas. Flights were grounded and highways closed in Northern California on Friday as gusts reached nearly 130 kph during the second wave of an arctic storm that sent trees crashing onto houses, cars and roads. Forecasters expected the storm to dump as much as three meters of snow in the Sierra Nevada by Sunday. AP

Suharto condition worsens

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Former Indonesian dictator Suharto's condition worsened overnight, and he needs a second pacemaker and will likely undergo dialysis, a member of the presidential medical team said Saturday. The 86-year-old, who brutally ruled Indonesia for more than three decades until being toppled by a prodemocracy uprising in 1998, has been in and out of the hospital in recent years for various unexplained reasons. He was readmitted Friday to the capital's Pertamina Hospital after falling ill at home several days ago. Doctors had said his condition was still life-threatening, but that appeared to have changed Saturday. AP

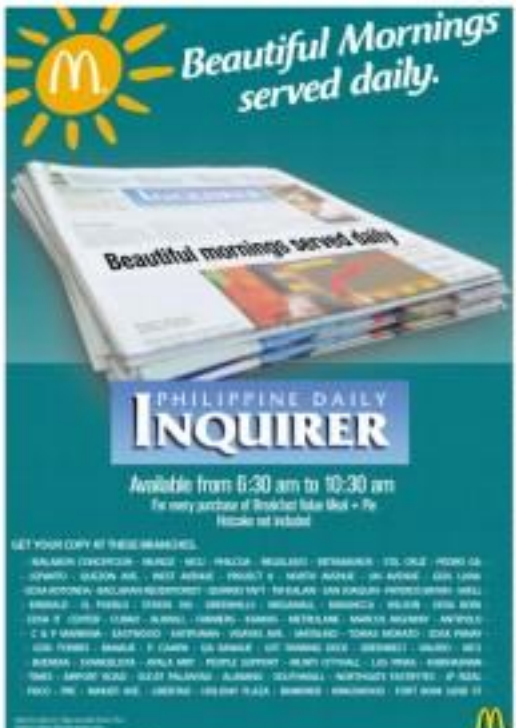
SUHARTO

US high court to decide on death for child rapist

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court agreed on Friday to decide whether the Constitution allows the death penalty for the rape of a child. The justices added only three days before a scheduled argument in another important death penalty case, on the standard for judging whether chemicals used in lethal-injection executions make that method of execution unconstitutionally cruel. The new case is likely to be argued in April. No one has been executed in the United States for a crime other than murder since 1964. Of approximately 3,300 inmates currently on death row, only one is facing execution for an offense that did not involve a killing. He is Patrick Kennedy. The Louisiana jury that sentenced Kennedy to die here agreed to hear. He was sentenced to death in 2004 for raping his 8-year-old stepdaughter. AFP

Malaysia court halts Islamic burial

KUALA LUMPUR—A Malaysian court gave an ethnic Chinese man a temporary order to prevent an Islamic affairs council from taking his wife's body for burial, a lawyer said Saturday, whether she converted to Islam, a newspaper reported on Saturday. The row over the body of 53-year-old Moog Soo Lan is the latest in a series of racial and religious incidents that could hurt support for the government ahead of expected snap elections in the coming months. In the burial matter, a dispute over manager Ngian. The Hong man, informed by a hospital which had his wife's remains that he could claim the body to perform Christian rites but must hand it over to the Islamic council for a Muslim burial. Reuters



Colombian rebels admit not having boy

BOGOTA—COLOMBIAN REBELS admitted on Friday they did not have a boy they had promised to release last week in a bizarre media-sponsored hand-over of hostages and accused the government of snatching him just as he was about to be freed.

Many in Colombia were on matchbooks over the yearend holidays waiting for Marxist guerrillas to release the child named Emmanuel, a boy born to (ex-captive) and to thought to be 3 or 4 years old.

But Olda was nowhere accustomed by the attorney general showed he was already living under state foster care in Bogota after being rotted over by the rebels in 2005.

The revelation is a major blow to credibility of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, which had promised to turn him and two other hostages over to Venezuela's left-wing president, Hugo Chavez.

The deal to release Emmanuel, his mother Clara Rojas, and a kidnapped lawmaker named Consuelo Gonzalez crumbled on Monday when the rebels accused the army of intensifying its operations in a jungle area where the hostages were to be handed over.

Colombia's conservative President Alvaro Uribe accused the FARC of lying and said it did not go through with the hostage release because Emmanuel had already been quietly handed over to child welfare authorities.

In a statement late on Friday the FARC said it had turned the boy over to a Bogota family to keep him safe until his official release, and called Uribe the real child snatcher.

The complex scenario popped for more hostage talks even though the statement said the FARC still wants to release Rojas and Gonzalez.

The rebel group, funded by cocaine smuggling, says it is fighting for socialism. But over 40 wing Colombian politicians say it has many people to support.

Emmanuel was born to Rojas and one of her guerrilla captors in an inner-infested jungle camp where hostages are poorly fed and often chained, according to former captives.

He is seen as a symbol of the young victims of Colombia's four-decade-old guerrilla war and became a national obsession this week when Uribe said he was mistreated by kidnappers.

Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Still no races** as owners step up oust-Fianza move /A22

Sunday SPORTS

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■ **Hot Pistons,** Celtics cross paths on wings of victory /A24

MVP labels UAAP-NCAA merger a 'national objective'

By Jaemier W. Faye

THE PROPOSED UAAP AND NCAA merger is part of a "national objective" that aims to streamline the basketball program of collegiate leagues nationwide.

Manny V. Pangilinan, president of the PAP Basketball Confederation (PBC), says the merger is the ideal way to address the issue and upgrade the overall game in being together the country's top two school organizations.

"Both the NCAA and UAAP have a history of excellence; it's hard for them to give up their histories and legacies," said Pangilinan in a radio interview yesterday.

"We understand that we have to be sensitive to considerations like this. But what should be more important is the national objective, especially for the collegiate players in the provinces who need aid and recognition."

Pangilinan noted that the UAAP-NCAA union is just the initial step of a basketball program that aims to universalize the collegiate league nationwide.

"I think we're ever-ready to see how it goes. Second season not only of the NCAA and the UAAP, but hopefully on a national basis," said Pangilinan. "We have to take baby steps before a beautiful union can happen."

BASUGBP executive director Patrick Gregorio already initiated exploratory talks with several school officials the past week.

PANGILINAN

"There are opportunities but it's normal. It's changes," said Gregorio on the program "Sports Talk" anchored by former Senator and now Pasig Mayor Vicky Eusebio on DZSR.

"We are confident we can address this. One thing that we want, we've never said no but we have to kill the tradition and the institution. We want to protect the NAAP and the NCAA. On our part, it's how we can elevate the level of college basketball, how we can develop and can realize the programs, and improve the programs of the federation."

Among the concerns raised were the involvement format, the UAAP and NCAA district rules and the financial sharing between the two leagues.

There are many issues we have to talk about," said Gregorio, adding that the BAP-SEC will send a concept paper and address the issues to the two leagues only next week.

The foremost aspect of the merger is a big issue according to school officials.

"We have to agree on the financial sharing," said Jesus Arayle, SC, the athletic representative to the NCAA management committee. "Will the UAAP agree to share in the NCAA facilities [in Sulo Jaenco gym specifically]? Or will the NCAA agree to share in the UAAP facilities [in Rizal Memorial]?"

The issue on the sharing of finances is a major concern, particularly because Ateneo-La Salle since have been a cash cow of sorts for the UAAP.

The heart of the merged league has also been a source contentions, but Gregorio said UAAP-UP has been open to revenue-sharing.

"There are already about 24 proposals on the format," said Gregorio. "But one thing's standing out; a clear both leagues will play. We'll have a champ, one in the UAAP and the NCAA. That is not that, the top four in each league will battle in a crossover format."

Purefoods, Sta. Lucia seek crucial victories

By Herang B. Candila

PUREFOODS TRIES TO MAKE it official while Sta. Lucia hopes to gain at least a playoff for the other premium slot today in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup eliminations at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Tender Juicy Giants, who have tied the tournament's eight-team field, seek to ultimately make the Final Four when they battle the Coca-Cola Tigers in the 4:30 p.m. contest.

Red-hot Sta. Lucia, which has won its last six games to loom straight to avoid elbow right behind the Giants, drop it on with powerhouse May nella in the 6:30 p.m. nightcap, seeking a victory that would guarantee the Realtors at least a playoff for the second outright semifinal slot.

Purefoods is at 11-4 and even a loss will not take the Giants out of the No. 1 spot. They will actually have two more games left to nail the all-important 12th win and could even qualify outright with an winning spots if to other team reaches 12 wins. (See complete [illegible] 422)

Kenny MVP Jones Yap spun brush the Giants along with Kelly Bumanlag and the rumbunprovised Peter Jane Simon.

The Realtors, meanwhile, are at 10-6 and known to the pesky lakers quite a collegiate side that has struggled despite one of the most complete line-ups in the tournament.

A victory will make it seven straight for the Realtors, who have not played this well since winning their first and only championship landscaped by the irrepressible Dennis Owens in the 2000 Governors'sCup.

Owens, who has been a key cog in the rise for the ubiquitous Alaska boys, who are nursing third with a 10-7 slate, as well as the Beverage Masters and the Red Bull Barako.

Kelly Williams, the Realtors national team standout, will again lead the Panthers along with Enrico Villanueva and Ronjay Buenafe.

The winning pair will be beckoned by

PUREFOODS /A23

Secret vote may decide new PBA commish?

WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER deadlock looming, the Philippine Basketball Association board of governors will meet tonight to discuss possible solutions to break an impasse when it convenes again on Thursday to name its permanent commissioner.

Among the steps being prepared is for the members to vote in secret if another deadlock, similar to the two 5-4 counts that happened last Dec. 17, struggles between Jenny Chiu-Tolentino and businessman Lucio Co Tiong Su.

Under the league's constitution and by-

SECRET /A23

SHARK'S DAT Zambo's Billy Mamaril and Red Bull's Mick Pennisi battle for control of the ball in the Barako's Sunday Polo match.

Viloria victorious in ring comeback, eyes Donaire

FORMER INTERLIGHT FLYWEIGHT KING Jorlan Viloria made a successful return appearance, scoring a knockdown in the 8th round against Jose Acosta Jr. to win by a unanimous decision yesterday at the Alameda Sweepstakes in Los Angeles, California.

According to 3Seconds.com, Viloria took some punches in the early fighting himself charged unanswered throughout the fight, but the 5th-ran fighter was rewarded for being more active throughout the affair. Sta. Viloria knocked down Bernal with a big right to the breadbasket in the early going of the final round. Sure-working his opponent, Viloria was able to secure the unanimous decision.

All three judges saw the bout 78-72 for Viloria, who improved to 29-2. Bernal slid to 26-12-1.

Viloria-Acosta keep himself active this year, and is, however, only longer IBF/IBO flyweight champ Jhonny Gonzalez in the near future.

The two PH-ans fighters have crossed paths during their amateur days, with Viloria earning what was described as controversial win over the talented Donaire.

Could, however, said Viloria should fight Donaire in a rematch? Sure thing, said Viloria.

Salvacion L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Here's how to join:

1) Answer the first (1) question in a letter of 200 words or less.

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3) Pay one extra word over (1) entry to the word that you want more than your entry inquirer will have your first entry. All other entries will be disqualified.

4) Include the following information in your entry:
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b) Residential address
c) Landline number
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e) Date of birth

5) Participants must be residents of the Philippines and must be at least 18 years old.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Bata, Alex lead RP charge in Derby Classic

RYMEN "RAIDER" REYES, ALEX PACE, Jason and three other Filipinos handled their respective rivals as the start of the 2008 Derby City Classic Bank Pool Saturday at the Executive Pool Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky.

Reyes — "Olympic" Tournament, however, was spared in Sun Sports.

The 52-year-old Reyes, the 1999 Cardiff World Pool winner, clobbered David Williams

Pagalunan, the 2004 champion in Taiwan, topped Jason Hakanson.

Rodolfo Luat, Senior Sambajon and Jose "Amang" Parico also won their opening matches.

Luat, the pride of Jonathan Ilyk's Bingoo Billiard Stable, demolished Danny Smith; Sambajon trounced Mike Corbley; and Parico shocked 2007 Derby City Classic #3 ball pool runner Herk Peijen of the Netherlands.

"Kung magsunda ang swerte nasin sa God's hope for good results sa Kentucky para magsunda ang swerte ng team sa Indiana and the rest right na pool competition," said billiards patron Ariston "Boyet" Pajot.

Reyes finished second in the 2007 edition behind American Steve Moore while Luat settled for third.

Reyes is the winningest Filipino in Jasper's Derby series, winning the one pocket event and the master of the nine games to add $20,000 to his earnings.

Luat and Bustamante finished second and third, respectively, in the 9-ball event, portion which was topped by Pajot. Reyes ended up in 42nd place.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

RACING KIDS owners-to-be Ivy Martin presidente Benhur Abalos (center), (from left) Eric Tagle, Sandy Javier, Patch Puyat, Rudy Pantoncan, Francisco Cayco and Sonny Acosta show their unity to fight the Philracom leadership during their press briefing at Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City yesterday

Still no races as owners step up oust-Fianza move

By Musong R. Castillo

THERE WILL BE NO RACES AGAIN today and possibly on Tuesday as three big groups of horseowners stepped up their campaign to oust Florencio Fianza as chair of the Philippine Racing Commission.

Leaders of the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners (Mahro), the Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Organization (Philtobo) and Hijo Con Juan de Manila (HCJM), which claim to hold 70 percent of the total racehorse population, yesterday held a joint conference at Wack Wack and urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to replace Fianza.

Members of the three racing groups did not declare their horses for this weekend's programs, forcing the cancellation of races at the Santa Ana Park in Makati this weekend and possibly the first day of next week's races at the San Lazaro Leisure Park on Tuesday.

"The overwhelming majority of horseowners strongly demand that their action manifests their protest against detrimental policies and directives implemented since 2005 by the Philracom," a press statement said.

The combined groups claimed that Fianza, a retired police general, "has politicized himself from horseowners due to his non-consultative leadership pretending from a perceived lack of full knowledge (of horses and horse racing) and understanding of the industry."

But Fianza, in a telephone interview with the bureau, said that all the allegations of the three groups were baseless. He said that he would come up with his own statement within the week.

Some members of the three groups, who requested that they not be identified at the moment, also said that they do not support the "racing holiday" since it only backtracks the progress of the industry.

Hataza, the groups alleged, never came up "with a comprehensive racing program that will cover all aspects of racing involving all sectors of the industry."

Part of the detrimental policies the groups are claiming was the implementation of the "pre-ground handicapping system" that the Philracom came up with last year where races and three-year olds are confined to racing only against each other.

The Philracom's distribution "of gross monthly slot dole out released to the Office of Sweepstakes" is also questioned.

They also claimed that since Fianza took over early last year, sales of the Philracom stagnated as the industry only enjoyed a 1.17 percent increase in sales compared to the 13.22 percent growth it experienced annually from 1999 to 2003 "despite being allocated the biggest budget in its history."

The groups also said that sales last year dipped by 2.78 percent.

Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, also the Mahro president, will be the combined groups' representative when it sits in grilling before President Arroyo in Malacanang.

"The industry calls for reinstatement of the Philracom leadership. I hope the President will hear our side because we know that she has a good heart and we're doing this strike for the benefit of the racing industry" said Abalos.

The group noted that Ms Arroyo has still to act on their grievances which were published in open letters last March 1 and July 19.

Meanwhile, Eddie Jose clarified that he has resigned as Philracom commissioner since early last year.

Swing vote now favors Ramos?

"FOR SOLUTION TOO," IF THOSE words sound Greek to you, they shouldn't. Literally They're Latin, according to Lambert Ramos, one of two remaining candidates for PBA commissioner, and they were culled from the Blessed Virgin Mary's Magnificat.

In English, the phrase means "the will be done?" Lambert had quoted the Blessed Virgin when I cited in an earlier column reports that the commission ership was already in the bag for him.

IN HUDDLE

Butch Cortez

To most souls, I don't know how this report got around or if there is some truth in it. Instead of calling some governors, who would most likely be holding their cards close to their chests, to verify, I thought Id call Lambert, who was rumored to the successor not to be.

* * *

Lambert said he has not been in touch with any of the governors since the Dec. 17 board meeting.

"I don't know the internal developments within the board, if at all there is any. I have no idea what the outcome of the Jan. 10 meeting will be."

According to sources, however, there had been a reversal of fortunes during the holiday impasse, the swing vote turning in favor of Lambert. Last Dec. 17, the governors gunned with neither Lambert or Ditdit Salud getting the required 6 votes from the board. (Ditdit got 5 and Lambert, 4.

Now it's 5 for Lambert or 4 for Ditdit, if we are to believe reports from the grapevine.

So early as Dec. 17, there had been talks that if Lambert gets 6 votes initially, he will win because one of the holdouts which he have votes for Ditdit to would now vote for Lambert to the next round, raising to 6 the total number of votes for the elected president.

We will only prove the veracity of these reports after the board reconvenes on Jan. 14 to declare the new commissioner by secret balloting.

* * *

"If it is God's will, it will happen. If not, I am happy to have been part of the selection process," said Lambert yesterday.

It is such a clear that although his boss landedsalt and he is interested in the job of commissioner, he is not obsessed with the position.

As country manager of Budweiser here assigned in Davao in the mid-90's, Lambert was responsible for sending PBA caravans to play in Davao City sentiment.

The PBA teams were booked in the best hotels and treated like VIP's wherever they went. A PBA game was always a big-salted event in that time.

Whichever way the wind blows on Jan. 10, the new commissioner will have to roll up his sleeves and get down to assume work as soon as possible.

From what I gathered, the marketing department of the PBA is in shambles with members of the staff in exodus.

I haven't had time to investigate on the rebus and whereabouts. All I know is that in the last few months, 9 or 8 marketing men have resigned.

* * *

A big celebration for the Living Legend's 62nd birthday on March 8 is being prepared by the 1966 Legends Foundation. Lito headed by its chairman this time, Jun Antonio's former Toyota teammate.

According to Abe, it will be a touching series of festivities where the biggest names in the PBA will gather to play against each other in selected cities in Luzon.

"The Filipinos-base are very excited. The response to the event is overwhelming. Imagine, they will have a chance to see their idols at close range and even ballpark with them," Abe said.

Jaworski and the other legends will be in California from March 8 to 16 during the conference break.

Expected to join the entourage are Idols Patrimonio, Samboy Lim, Allan Caidic, Hector Calma, Biendo Pumaren, Manny Victorino, Virgil Villavicencio, Jojo Lastimosa, Ginoy Espinosa, Nelson Asaytono, Alvin Patrimonio, Bonnie Magsanoc, Bong Tanseco and others, with Ruby Dalupan and Jimmy Gliverio as coaches of the opposing teams.

Bulina Ignacio, who used to be with the 1993 Countryman ballclub and is now vice-president of the Legends Foundation, will be in Manila next week to finalize arrangements for the Big 70 birthday bash.

JOINT: Uy (left) gets his 3rd place trophy from 2007 US Open champ Michael Campbell.

Uy cops 3rd in BMW golf

THE PHILIPPINE REPRESENTATIVE FOR the Men's A division, Jerry Uy placed third in the recent BMW Golf Cup International 2007 held at Oatlands Golf Club in Sydney, Australia.

Uy, a 12 handicapper and nominee of Glaxo (SMN scorer) 100 points after playing three days in challenging course conditions against 43 other competitors from around the world.

The Philippine team composed of Uy, Meiat Faustino (Men's B) and Rosalie Chua (Ladies' Division) finished 2nd for fourth with host country Australia.

"I still believe I played fair," said the 30-year-old Uy. "The course was difficult and we had to endure cold and cold rain."

The event attracts around 216,000 golfers each year as each BMW subsidiary hosts its own national finals. Winners of the national finals then represent their country in the annual National Cup at the World Finals.

Austrian Josef Rauer won the Men's A title while Malaysian Soei Siu Chiong topped the Men's B plum. Denise Hedbloom sided the Ladies' division. Austria won the team event with South Africa second and Malaysia third.

Motorsports gets shot in arm with Mighty-Velocity team-up

LOCAL MOTORSPORTS GOT A BIG shot in the arm recently with Mighty Corporation through its flagship brand Mighty Filter Rings, forging a partnership with Team Velocity in the Philippine Touring car arena.

Initially, Mighty Corporation has participated in the Philippine Motorsports Festival through the Mighty Filter Rings Velocity Motors team that competed in the Endurance race at the Subic International Raceway.

The Mighty Filter Rings Velocity Racing Team is composed of three Asian Group 3 Nortex driver Dominic Uy and Group 3 Nortex driver Dominic Uy.

"Much like our involvement in basketball, it is just apt that we do our share in the growth and development of Philippine Motorsports which has gained big stakes lately," said Mighty Corporation Chief Operating Officer Carmie Ming-Ibasking.

DOMINIC Uy drives the Mighty Filter Rings sponsored car in Motorsports Festival.

CAGEFEST BACKER: Benedict Chua, representative of Xavier School rocks Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball League, and Michelle Perez-Bonifacio, AVP sales & marketing of Cougar Athletic Brands, Inc., distributor of Puma shoes and apparel, sign an agreement making Puma as one of the major sponsors of the Tiong Lian basketball tournament slated next week.

NCFP holding polls Jan. 19 in Tagaytay

THE NATIONAL CHESS Federation of the Philippines will be holding the election for members of the of the board of directors on Jan. 19 at the Tagaytay City Convention Center.

According to NCFP president Prospero "Butch" Pichay and secretary general Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino, the 15 board members will be chosen and shall elect from among themselves the officers of the organization.

Only accredited delegates of regular members (clubs and/or organizations) and City Chapter members in good standing, shall be qualified to vote and aspire to be a board member.

Under Pichay's leadership, the NCFP was able to organize nine Grandmaster tilts in Dumaguete, Lucena and Tagaytay in this year.

For details, contact NCFP director lawyer Ed Custodio Leguia at (0920-222-1871).

Marlon Bernardino

Williams destroys Sharapova in JB tilt

HONG KONG—VENUS WILLIAMS BEAT Russia's Maria Sharapova in straight sets, 6-4, 6-3, Saturday to win the JB Group Classic exhibition in Hong Kong, a warmup for the upcoming Australian Open.

Both players held serve comfortably in the early games, but the Russian faltered first, serving at 4-5 in the first set. Sharapova sent a backhand into the net after a long rally and then missed another backhand to give the American a one-set lead.

World No. 5 Sharapova, a past winner at Wimbledon and the US Open, was erratic in the second set.

Down 2-3, she double-faulted and missed a backhand to give the reigning Wimbledon champ the crucial break.

Sharapova did save two match points in her final service game, but Williams held to love to take the match, closing out the game with a forehand winner.

"It's very exciting, especially going into the Australian, having played very well against someone of her (Sharapova's) caliber," Williams said. The Australian Open is scheduled to take place Jan. 14-27.

Meanwhile, 9 Williams, a six-time Grand Slam winner, outclassed Friday of a hard-hitting newcomer but appeared unaffected thereafter.

She said the hammering discomfort felt better after Uncharted. Williams also said she felt on her left wrist while practicing in Hong Kong but that the wrist felt 100 percent now.

"I just had the opportunity to get my racket on the ball and play it deep. I guess I served well. I returned OK. So I guess it was about doing everything good," she said.

Sharapova said she took some chances because she was playing against an opponent to good form.

"When your opponent is serving big and serving consistently, you're really got to take your chances on opportunities, serves and serves, which I did a good job of," she said.

The eight-woman field at the JB Group Classic also featured the likes of Ana Ivanovic, and Elena Dementieva. AP

SPORTSWATCH

Cavite-Bulacan backfight

THE TRADITIONAL MACHEMATCHES as Cavite vs. Bulacan will be held today at the Cavite Coliseum and Derby Center, Aguinaldo Highway, Bacoor, Cavite.

This will be the 16th edition of this event founded by lawyer Pete Principe, president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Bacoor Chapter.

PBA chair Fermin Reviña Sr., Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., and Mayor Strike Revilla will host a breakfast for the Bulacan candidates at their residence in Bacoor at 7 a.m.

The 24 teams of Bulacan have their delegations and will be joined by Mayor Remy Castro, Edu Manzano, Boboy Malonzo, Peping Guillermo, Sgro Salvo, Federico Tionson, Orlando Gabriel, Ruling Valencia, Carol Lloyd and incumbent Rose Galvez.

Religion Anniversary derby

THE NUMBER OF CONFIRMED ENTRIES continues to soar for Religion Mega Cash pro's 18th Anniversary 5-cock derby on Jan. 20 and 18.

As big group of trainers and breeders headed by Jesus Jimenez, Peter Gerry Sebastian, Tony Santos, Larry Barbaza, Pol Borja, Cesar Padilla, Moe Bocanas, Tolong Makandog, Allan Sison, Superfinga group, Jaime Ilo, Eddy Alcantara, Tonee del Rosario, Abraham Bermudez and Mandy Hernandez.

Atty. Vicky Lajon, who will be backed by the Super Ninja group, staked a guaranteed prize of P1.2 million.

Lajon pegged the entry fee at P5,000 and minimum bet P4,000.

For reservations of cockmates, call 89-6325/5, 892-9038 and 852-0961.

PCAP weigh-in today

OFFICIAL LISTINGS AND NAMES IN THE CONFIRMED weighing-in 3 drag to 2.4 kg) must be submitted today at the new Makati Coliseum for the Penny Cockers Association (PCAP) 5-cock derby derby.

PCAP's season-beginning derby commence with 70 fights on tap. Other schedules are Feb. 11, March 10, Apr. 14, May 12, June 16 and July 7.

Promoters Ato Ordaz, Rudy Salud and William Cord INTL Sports and Amusement Corp. each the members with five-road number of points at the end of the series gets the 2008 Cockers of the Year plum.

Meanwhile, a one-day shoot-fest billed as Winning Time Juliet 5-cock derby series at Makati Coliseum on Jan. 14. For info call 8962661, 8966815 and 8966838.

GMA leads Olympic gold hunt

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is clearly making her presence felt in sports. Recently she conferred on bowling legend Rafael "Paeng" Nepomuceno the Order of Lakandula with the Special Class of Champion for Life at Malacañang's Moro Room. Nepomuceno was declared by both Houses of Congress as the first Filipino Athlete of All Time. His career in bowling has also served for the country as prestigious world championships, making him an International Bowling Hall of Famer. The President also told sports officials she will be on top of things as the country seeks to end an Olympic gold medal drought in Beijing this August.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MALACAÑANG PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo is on top of the Olympic gold medal hunt in Beijing.

Rep. Monico Puentevella, top Malacañang ally and POC Olympic team chief of mission, revealed this yesterday following an audience with the Chief Executive, who was informed of the details of the first Olympic meeting between the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission.

He didn't say how much the Palace will allocate for the training and preparation of the expected 30 athletes for the 2008 Games, but reiterated the active role that the President and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, will play in the Olympic campaign.

"The President already stressed that she will be on top of the Olympic gold medal quest," said Puentevella, who was accompanied by POC chair Butch Ramirez during the Malacañang meeting.

The favored token, who is also first vice president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, said Ramirez and amateur boxing chief Manuel Lopez had been given the green light to shop for a Cuban coach for the ABC team.

Even the Philippine ambassador to Cuba has been tasked to negotiate with a top boxing mentor for the Filipino boxers, the brightest hopes to end the country's Olympic drought.

Puentevella said Ms. Arroyo, whose support was formally sought by POC president Peping Cojuangco the other day, has been behind the Olympic drive since last year.

The congressman said he had already met with Mr. Arroyo and Ramirez in Beijing three times to discuss the game plan for the Olympics.

"This is why the three of us went to Beijing several times before in (Mr. Arroyo) got sick. The agenda has always been Beijing," Puentevella added.

Now the godfathers' scheme, where the sport with medal presented at the Olympics will be supported by a private corporation, has been approved through Mr. Arroyo's initiative.

Eight athletes have qualified for the Beijing Olympics, but more are expected to make it as Beijing after going through other qualifying meets starting late this month.

The Philippine boxing team, the brightest hope to end the drought, is sending six athletes to Bangkok later this month in the hopes of nailing Olympic berths in a qualifying tournament there.

Boxer Harry Tanamor already qualified for the feature through a tournament in Chicago late year.

Purefoods, Sta. Lucia target crucial victories today

From page A31

veterans Marlou Aquino, Dennis Espino and Pedro Mendoza.

Magnolia, on the other hand, will turn to a deep roster that includes the likes of Danny Seigle, Dondon Hontiveros, Lordy Tugade, Ian Sonsona, Dorian Peña, Ilan Saguiguis, Larry Rosacura and Glen Barrido.

At Ohio time, Red Bull and Magnolia are already assured of quarterfinal status, but making the Final Four outright remains a long shot.

Purefoods opened up the tournament by winning its first seven games and half of its next eight, while Coca-Cola, since acquiring Ati Tordesa in a trade with Talk 'N Text for Ali Peek and draft rights, has won five out of seven matches.

The Tigers are one of the quarterfinal running and can only get in that round through the wildcard phase. They are playing for a better position in the round and a win tonight will move them closer to bagging No. 8 seeding.

Apart from Tordesa, Coca-Cola coach Bonky Serrano can rely on veteran Kenneth Duremdes, whose game has been on the rise lately, and speedy rookie Bonjay Bravante.

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	7	4
Sta. Lucia	6	5
Alaska	10	7
Magnolia	9	7
Talk'N Text	8	7
Red Bull	9	8
Barako	6	6
Coca-Cola	5	7
Air21	4	8
Welcoat	3	11

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:30 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Coca-Cola
8:00 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. Magnolia

Secret vote may decide new PBA commish?

From page A31

Lores, a candidate for commissioner should get at least three fourths vote of the board, in this case, six, to win the post.

Jalad, son of the eminent lawyer and former PBA commissioner Rudy Jalad, and Ramos, the self-made telecommunications executive and marketing whiz, battled in the proverbial dime last Dec. 17.

However, there were reconfirmed reports that the balloting will end on Thursday with most members of the board already decided on their respective choices.

Whoever wins will become the seventh commissioner of Asia's first play-for-pay league, a very influential position in the country's basketball landscape vacated following the resignation of Noli Eala.

Previous winners said that during the last voting, Jalad was the one who had five votes in each of the rounds.

The same source said that it is likely that the Jan. 10 meeting could again end up in a draw since the supporters of both candidates have been very adamant and have pledged to stick with their respective candidates all the way. Manong R. Guerilla

Korean scores John Hay double

BAGUIO CITY—KOREAN KIM Jong min made a rare double victory after he bagged the titles in the club championship and eighth Chairman's Cup, which are two of the three annual major tournaments of the Camp John Hay Golf Club.

Kim, a new member of John Hay, defeated Shoon Bob in a classic duel to the club championship. He then wrapped up with a great five-under-par 66 for the victory over William Kim at the Chairman's Cup last week and was awarded a green jacket like in the US Masters.

International females shared the spotlight when he won the low net flaws with his impressive 11-under 58.

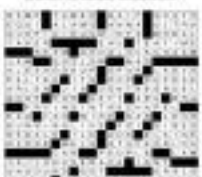
Kim's efforts, though, did not go to waste because he set 62 over Jun Glen A. Isaman. Mount Garcia was runner-up with 64 while Mats Garcia was in third place with 66.

Another Korean, Son Yong-kong topped Class B as he smashed Steven Abi's 68. Richard Soliani was runner-up with 62.

"We would like to thank our members for the unexpected reunion. This was a fun try from our first Chairman's Cup when we only had 20 players. We'll have more to score in 2008 so late to more members in future club events," said Camp John Hay chairman Robert Sobrepeña.

Philip Ang was a big winner, too, after he won Manila 3 nodes in the quarter-raffle features in the event sponsored by Club Leisure, GH Dev. Co., GH Manor Hotel, Wilson Sports, Mizuno, Office Eyewear, Golfers Inc., Referral Management, Kirk Inc., John Hay Point Systems, Wetland Security, Valentino Sauna House and RCC.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



BOSS IRONMAN

Riders take time out for a photo op just before plunging into the annual Boss Ironman challenge, a grueling 1,200-km, 24-hour motorcycle endurance ride, backed by Shell Advance, Globe Platinum and BMW Ride, yesterday. The riders, will try to complete a Manila-Tagaytay-Lemery-Baguio-Clark route under 24 hours. For more information on the endurance ride, which is organized by the BMW Owners Society of Salvadores (Boss), visit www.boss.com.ph and runningboss.com.

Sunday SPORTS

Hot Pistons, Celtics cross paths on wings of victory

TORONTO—THE DETROIT PISTONS AND THE Boston Celtics head into their highly-anticipated Eastern Conference rematch by hiking their NBA streaks Friday.

Richard Hamilton scored 32 points and the Detroit Pistons won their 11th consecutive game, beating the Toronto Raptors, 101-93, on Friday.

"History at night or history, that's an amazing feat to Our league," Chauncey Billups of the Pistons told reporters after scoring 28 points.

Rasheed Wallace added 20 as the Pistons matched up for a rematch with the league-leading Boston Celtics in Detroit on Saturday.

The Pistons handed the Celtics one of their three losses this season with an 87-85 win in their first meeting on Dec. 19.

Andrew Bargnani had 21 points for the Raptors in three quarters. He took only one shot in the fourth and missed.

Chris Bosh added 20 points and 16 rebounds as Toronto lost for the fifth time in seven games.

In Boston, reserve Tony Allen filled in when Ray Allen struggled, and scored a season-high 20 points to help the Celtics beat the Memphis Grizzlies, 100-86.

The Celtics recorded their eighth straight win. They makes their Saturday night match against the Pistons a battle of teams on a combined 33-game winning streak.

Ray Allen went 6 for 19 from the floor, but sank a pair of free throws with 9.3 seconds left to avoid his first scoreless opposition since in a decade.

In Orlando, Florida, Rafer Alston scored 20 points, including the game-winning layup with four seconds left, and the Houston Rockets narrowly escaped the Magic with a 96-94 victory.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, the home side won a season-high fourth straight game and handed Charlotte its 11th consecutive road loss, 102-96.

In Cleveland, Daniel Gibson hit a dagger-like three pointer with 32 seconds left as the Cavaliers avoided embarrassment after a hour three-handed tournament, 97-91.

LeBron James scored 34 points for the Cavaliers.

In Indianapolis, Indiana beat Atlanta, 112-93, to snap a five-game losing streak.

In Milwaukee, Antawn Jamison scored 26 points and Washington shot 56 percent from the field to hammer the Indiana Bucks, 103-97.

In San Antonio, defensive specialist Bruce Bowen showed off his offense, scoring 31 points to help the Spurs hold off the New York Knicks, 97-95.

The Knicks have lost six in a row and fallen 1 1/2 on the road.

In Minneapolis, Allen Iverson scored 33 points and Denver ripped Minnesota, 118-107.

Carmelo Anthony added 26 points for the Nuggets, who led 12-0 before the Timberwolves scored.

In Dallas, the home side seemed to take victory for granted against undermanned Miami and nearly wound up getting beat. Jason Kidd—needing a go-ahead 3-pointer by Josh Howard with 5.2 left and a defensive stand in the final seconds to keep the Heat at bay 94-91.

The Heat were without Shaquille O'Neal and Dwyane Wade.

In Oakland, California, New Orleans crushed Golden State, 116-104, to record a fifth straight road win.

Tyson Chandler had a season-high 22 points and matched a season-best with 22 rebounds to lead the Hornets to their largest road winning streak since also winning five straight in 2003.

In Los Angeles, Andrew Bynum had 22 points with 17 points and a career high 16 rebounds, and the Lakers shot 56 percent from the field to rout Philadelphia, 134-93. Reuters, AP

NEW ORLEANS' superstar playmaker Chris Paul drives the ball as he is guarded by Golden State Warriors forward Baron Davis and the Golden State Warriors.

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

HIT SONGS BY ELVES

answer to page A23

Rookie brings athleticism, and doughnuts, to NE Patriots

FOXBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS —The teammates no longer regard him as a rookie, especially now that the Patriots have claimed the pace-setter their historic 16-0 regular season and set their sights on extending the perfection to the playoffs.

But that has not absolved Brandon Meriweather of his rookie duties.

"He still brings us doughnuts and coffee, so he's still a rookie in that sense," said veteran Rodney Harrison. "But he's no longer a rookie. He's out there playing football. But he'd better sometimes with the Dunkin' Donuts or else he'll get fined by."

The defensive back out of the University of Miami classified when apprised of Harrison's remarks Friday at Gillette Stadium.

"It's been almost like two college seasons, as I guess I'm just a rookie anymore, huh?" Meriweather said.

It sure seems, yes. In another, no.

"Yeah, I've still got to bring all the coffee and I've got to bring all the doughnuts," Meriweather said. "And I've still got to get lunch for all the players before we travel to away games, so I guess I'm still a rookie until the first game of next year."

Delivered in the first round (24th overall), Meriweather, who set a record for defensive backs at Miami with 203 career tackles, was projected as a hard hitter with the versatility to play safety or cornerback. Meriweather made 22 of his 28 starts for the Hurricanes at strong safety, but at the Patriots, torn at right cornerback, one at left cornback, and one at nickel back.

"Well, when you draft a player, you get the total player," said Patriots coach Bill Belichick. "You get everything, so that's why we took him. He's a versatile player. There's a lot of things that he does well that even reasons why we drafted him."

Above all, Meriweather offered the Patriots a tantalizing mix of size, speed, talent and athleticism.

"To be honest with you, I really didn't know what would be my strong suit," Meriweather said. "But coming into the league you never know what a team may need or what a team may want you to do. I just came in with an open mind thinking that I would be a player for the New England Patriots."

Meriweather went through an adjustment period—as is the case with all rookies—but came his mark on the season, where he has recorded 18 tackles this season, including seven in the last five games.

"I think he's some strong," said defensive coordinator Dean Pees. "He's worked hard throughout the year. I think he's progressed. He's got himself to a position where he's getting some playing time here or of late, so I just think he has progressed this year and he's playing certainly a lot better right now than he played earlier in the year. We're pleased with him, the way he's working, and he's learning all the time and getting better."

Although he has benefited from the mentoring of Harrison and others in the secondary, Meriweather credits much of his progress to Belichick.

"I can't even begin to explain the ways he did a lot for me," said Meriweather. "Me and Bill, we sheet a lot, actually. Bill go over things—little extra things—that I needed, things to look for, keys to look for, all the little things I needed as a rookie. He helped me out a lot with those things."

New York Times/News Service

Canadian pair leads Mercedes PGA golf

KAPALUA, HAWAII—MIKE WEIR holed an 18-foot birdie putt on the final hole for a 67-under 67 and a one-shot lead over fellow Canadian Stephen Ames and Jonathan Byrd at the Mercedes-Benz Championship on Friday.

Ames, the only player in the field who actually lives in Canada, fired a flaw in his opening stroke and also shot 67, making birdie on three of his last five holes despite missing a 4-footer along the way.

Weir, raised in Bright's Grove, Ontario, now lives in the US and played only one full round of golf last month when he went to San Diego to check on equipment. Ames was born in Trinidad and Tobago and moved to Calgary in 1991, becoming a naturalized citizen in 2003. He hasn't played since winning the Shriners Open a month ago, and during his 10-day vacation at Maui, played only 36 holes over two days with his sons.

And here they are on an island in the Pacific, their names atop the leaderboard in the first tournament of the year.

"That's odd," Weir said. "We've probably the least ready for it."

AP

RORY Sabbatini throws his putter in frustration after finishing with a 74 (+4) today.

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IN THIS ISSUE
- Rebuilding Albay's shattered dreams /B2
- More than just styling and cutting hair /B4

Sunday B1

Leading a firm, helping the young

Oxford graduate puts 80 Filipino kids to school

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

OXFORD UNIVERSITY graduate Ian Thackeray is a man of many passions. Two of them are to lead a company from good to great and encourage the young to get an education.

Thackeray feels fortunate that as chief executive officer of Holcim Corp., one of the country's leading cement manufacturing companies, he can pursue both at the same time.

The Chemistry major, who went to Oxford as the same time as actor Rowan Atkinson (Mr. Bean), has been in the Philippines for just a little over one year, but has already helped Holcim retain its profitability on the back of higher sales.

Demand for Holcim products grew in his first year of operations and Holcim is on track to growing revenues even further this year on expectations that the property sector will remain upbeat and that government will spend more on infrastructure.

"The most important thing for us is to continue to be a reliable supplier in the market," Thackeray tells Sunday B1 in an interview. "To the best of my knowledge we have not failed to supply the needs of any of our customers. We have been a consistent and reliable supplier," he says.

Providing him as much satisfaction as generating more sales for Holcim, if not more, is sharing his time and resources with some grade school students in the Pasil-ing, Hinagdanan, Coral, Bacnka and Bataphat public elementary schools near Holcim's biggest plant in Bacnka.

Thackeray says it was his French wife who first got him involved with children when they were still living in Shanghai and he was still president for Asia of Tetra Laval, which makes products such as breast implants and ignition systems for cars.

He said his wife started with merely providing scholarship money to just a few girls in primary school, but the number of children they were helping grew as they realized just how many children needed help.

"I really think that education is the key to a better life," says the 49-year old CEO.

"My passion is get the young ones in

(SHOWBIZ B2)

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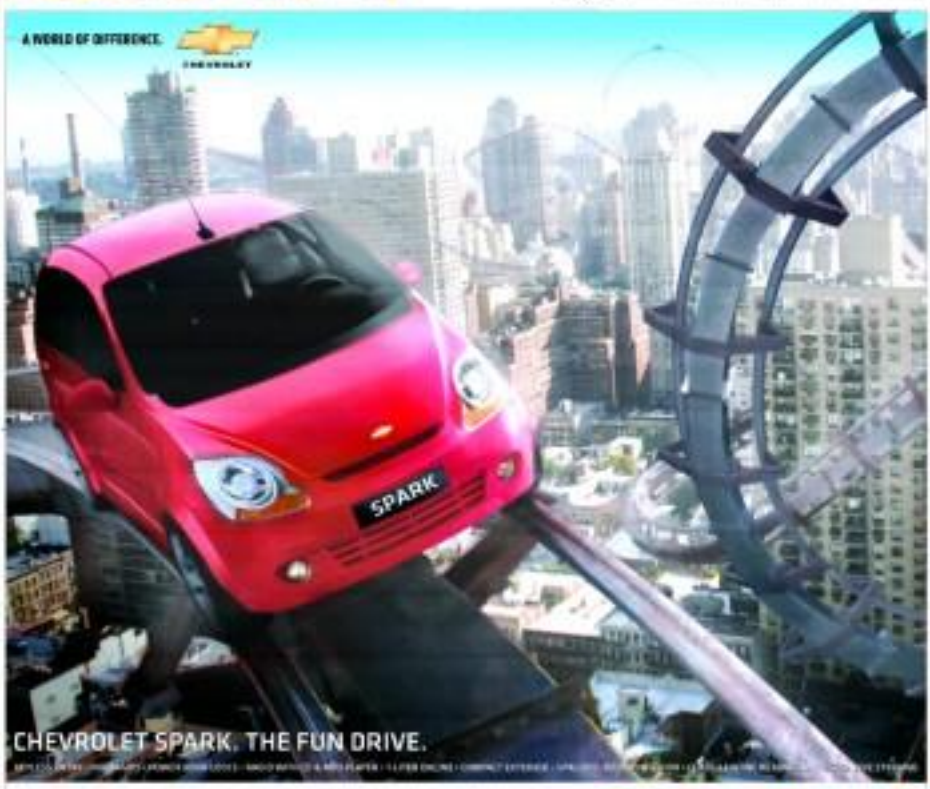


FEATURES IN BRIEF

Medical center opens in Greenfield City

GREENFIELD Development Corp. announced the opening of a top-level hospital on its booming Greenfield City in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The recently held inauguration of the new Southern Luzon Hospital and Medical Center (SLHMC) was attended by no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo, who was joined by top local officials led by Laguna Rep. Dan Fernandez, Laguna Gov. Teresita Lazaro, Sta. Rosa Mayor Irene Arellano-Rasalan and Calamba City Mayor Joaquin Chipeco. Showing their support were Greenfield Development Corp. s top executives, chairman Jeffry Campos and executive vice president Duane Rumbo.

SLHMC (www.slhmc.com.ph) is primed to bring state-of-the-art technology and medical expertise to Southern Luzon. Strategically located in Sta. Rosa, and the first on across of its kind to be built in Greenfield City and in the province, SLHMC can provide for the medical needs of the burgeoning communities of Sta. Rosa and nearby areas.

SLHMC is a seven-story, 150-bed tertiary hospital, with facilities at par with top Manila-based medical institutions. With a total floor area of 24,500 square meters, the hospital hosts a majestic lobby and reception area, 32 outpatient clinics* offices, an emergency room capable of handling 100 patients at a time, several X-ray and ultrasound rooms, intensive care suite rooms with stations' bungee, 15 operating theaters, ancillary diagnostic services including advanced laboratory and imaging equipment, a well-equipped pharmacy and convenient ad wareheouse, and large private patient rooms. SLHMC also has modern dental, dialysis and rehabilitation centers, and will have more than 100 active medical consultants in attendance.

SLHMC medical director Dr. Enrico "Jun" Juliano shared his plans that include a medical spa right inside the hospital, which would combine wellness medicine with modern remedies.

SLHMC is certainly a welcome addition to the booming Greenfield City, as it now provides residents with easy access to top quality medical care, and the hospital's top executives are only too happy to be of service. "We want to show every one that Filipinos can do it themselves — provide the highest quality standards in healthcare," shared SLHMC president and CEO Dr. Jose Juliano. "We are happy that the local community is in our service in realizing our dream of providing refined healthcare right here in Sta. Rosa."

Seminar for real estate investing

THE URBAN Institute will conduct a lecture on "Investing in Real Estate: Opportunities, Techniques and What are Needed to be Learned" on Jan. 17 - 2008, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. at the Masinloc function room, 2nd floor, Mary's Restaurant, east-bnd of Elorrieta 7, Ayala Center, Makati City.

The 6 hour lecture will cover the following topics: review of the different investment vehicles in real estate; investment in real estate; pitfalls and traps in real estate investments; why real estate appreciates; pros and cons of investing in vacant land; different areas of opportunities; techniques and how to's in real estate investment such as buy and sell; build and sell; property leasing; rehabilitation of foreclosed and distressed properties; master leasing; converting apartments to condominiums or condominiums; developing vacant lane lands; and an overview of this round-to-do's knowledge's before investing.

Aside to be lectured by Atty. Jose Ma. Ortiz, the same time and venue is a series of detailed topics, which can be attended separately, as follows: Jan. 23, Property Development and RUREO Rules; Jan. 30, Joint Ventures and Syndications in Real Estate Projects; Jan. 30, Management of Rental Properties; How to Maximize Income of Rental Properties; Feb. 4, Making Big Money in Distressed Properties; and Feb. 6, How to Start and Manage A Successful Real Estate Brokerage Company.

* This lecture series is accredited by DTI for CEP compliance and will have an lecturer Enrico Cruz, who has more than 40 years in real estate, engineering, construction, management and education. Cruz is also a licensed real estate consultant and 1st and 8th place in the real estate appraiser's and broker's board examinations respectively, and was involved as a "Real Estate Tallow" by the Philippine Council of Real Estate Educators.

For other details or advance registrations, do take invitations may be reached at 891-0828, or until phone numbers 3818-420-R12 to 0923-683-9431, 0923-309-2142 or by e-mail at urbanet@pacific.net.ph or urbanet.ph@gmail.com.

Gardenia celebrates 10 years

BACK IN 1998, white sandwich loaves were called "lady" and some referred to it as "the Americano," an upscale brand quietly made its way into supermarket shelves. It was mildly distinctive for being stacked upright instead of horizontally as most loaves were, and it had a unique resealable cellophane clip that enclosed the "bare behind" date and time. The bread was called Gardenia and then it was on its own taking its loud claims. But the forethought that went into the packaging spoke volumes of Buddha was to find lovers.

The proof, however, was in the tasting. Curious buyers who thought about trying it out discovered the "soft-n-fluffy bread," softness, and aroma enticing in other brands. Not only were buyers convinced of Gardenia's superior product, they turned into advocates as well. It was largely through their word-of-mouth that Gardenia breads became the premier brand it is today.

Since then, Gardenia Bakeries (Philippines) Inc. has taken this consumer loyalty to heart. It consistently outdoes expectations by introducing an array of delicious, fresh and nutritious products that is, in a word, "mouthpleasing." From the original classic white bread to its equally popular high fiber wheat bread, from the regular free 12-grain loaf to the heavy-cut loaf, from the high-calcium milk bread and "sugar-in variety" Gardenia spreads loaf to the native delicacies — Gardenia has delivered loaves and loaves of delicious bread to the country's every need. Gardenia products are carry made to be a source a healthy heart, immune fine and fortified with vitamins and minerals. In addition, the quality of its ingredients far exceeds the recommendations of the Department of Health.

In fact, Gardenia's equipment and baking process, which ensures the best-quality breads in town, have earned the company the International Organization for Standardization 2000 9001:2000 for product quality, and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) certification for food safety.

Today, Gardenia produces 400,000 loaves and buns per day from its four production lines with an annual capacity of 100 million. Gardenia has already posted record sales of over P1 billion in the past two years and has a market share of over 50 percent of the total branded bread segment. The continuing sales growth quantifies consumer satisfaction beyond expectations.

Then, available only in Metro Manila, Gardenia products are now shipped from its Laguna plant to breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack tables up north in Ilocos and Cagayan Valley, and down south to the beaches of Boracay in Iloilo, and most recently in Bacolod and nearby towns.

Thanks to its growth and innovation over the past 10 years, Gardenia has been named the "Outstanding Bread Manufacturer" by the Consumers Union of the Philippines for four straight years (2004-2007). Supermondo Asia also conferred it with Superbrand status from 2004 to 2007.

Indeed, Gardenia's tagline, "So good... you can even eat it on its own," wasn't just a clever advertising phrase, but smartly what its customers have been saying to it for its past 10 years.

So what is the secret ingredient of Gardenia's success? "It is Gardenia employees' undying collective effort to achieve excellence. These dedicated individuals are the driving forces that propel Gardenia to be number one," Simplicio Small Jr., president and general manager, stated. He added that what truly differentiates Gardenia from the rest is "Quality Begins with Me."

Rebuilding Albay's shattered dreams

LEGAZPI CITY, ALBAY—TEARS STREAM down her cheeks, but typhoon victim Rebecca Pimentado is smiling. After almost one year of painful waiting, she can now help finish building houses not only for her family, but also for many other Bicolanos left homeless when super typhoon Reming ravaged the Bicol region on Nov. 30, 2006.

Armed with newly learned skills from owner manufacturer Habitat for Philippines' new-day Gading Blanco bank masonry skills training program, 40-year-old Aling Rebecca says her priority project is to hasten reconstruction work for her new house. The local government and various local and international aid organizations awarded her a basic unfinished structure in the Tayuan Resettlement Area which she will proudly finish, applying her freshly acquired masonry enthusiasm. After that, she says, she will soon turn neighbors in building their own houses.

"The Gading Blanco program is a brainchild of Habitat Philippines and it has become our flagship corporate social responsibility program. This is Habitat's way of giving back to the community which served our home and we have as a country-wide materials manufacturer," says Jan Thadeusyng, Chief Operating Officer. Apart from training, the Gading Blanco program also has the Gading Blanco Olympics which showcases masons' skills to enhance levels of competition and the Gading Blanco Awards which recognizes exemplary masons.

Aling Rebecca was among thousands of Bicolanos affected by the strong winds, heavy downpours, and mud rush brought by typhoon Reming. Reportedly, Aling Rebecca's elderly father-in-law, husband, and their five children used to live, recorded the biggest number of casualties among villagers in Legazpi City.

As if watching their home get buried under deep mud was not painful enough, the family, like their neighbors, had to endure almost a year of living in tents and makeshift houses. Difficult and depressing is how Aling Rebecca describes their living conditions. Apart from the lack of proper housing, she and her neighbors have undergone health problems, lack of food and job-lessness, not to mention high homelessness.

Hearing about Habitat's Gading Blanco training program for Albay typhoon victims, the homemaker quickly signed up. "I wanted to learn the basics of building a house, the proper measurements, the correct use of cement, hollowblock, and all other masonry tasks. After this training, I will work double-time to finish our house," she says in the vernacular, pointing to a bare concrete frame which she will finish to make her home. Her family is proud of her, she says.

Amid the hustle and bustle of building four houses as part of training activities, it was easy to spot Aling Rebecca. She was among the 30 trainees in Tayuan. Groomed for the view that masonry is a man's world, she braved the rainy afternoons watching shoveling sand into bags, laying hollowblocks, and—admittedly—she is good and she is a fast learner. This, despite the fact that she does not have previous masonry experience," Jan. is Fetalino, an accredited assessor from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), says.

Another training session was held simultaneously at the Resettlement Area where 40 typhoon victims, seven of which were females, participated. As with the Tayuan trainees, they were assigned to build four houses.

Under the Gading Blanco program, Aling Rebecca and her co-trainees learned basic mathematics, work safety, basic masonry tools and equipment, masonry works, foundations, mortar, concrete and many other skills. Item trainers sent by the Association of Construction Consultants and Industrial Workers (Acics). Other project partners are the local government of Legazpi, the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

"After the seven-day program, trainees were given a Tesda certificate, making them highly employable not only locally, but internationally," Acisc head Eduardo Lo Carmine says. The rigorous training, he adds, has produced three 80 skilled typhoon victims who will form part of the province's pool of workers to hasten rebuilding homes. Newly-needed are their skills. Of 4,000 families left homeless by the typhoon there, only 1,600 have benefited from housing units.

In addition to the five-week training sessions and certification, Habitat gave each mason participant a set of construction tools—a trowel, working gloves, safety hat, dust mask, safety goggles and paint brushes. The company also shipped cement for their training and to build houses, as the Bicol region is not its market area.

REBECCA Pimentado is now a certified mason after undergoing Habitat's Gading Blanco training program. Her priority project is a house for her family. She was among thousands of Bicolanos who lost their homes due to typhoon Reming

Leading a firm, helping the young

From page B1

school and to keep them there because of the major effect of education on the children, their families, the community and then the country."

He was inspired to do the same in the Philippines by the dedication of Habitat people in implementing different community projects, in the areas of local infrastructure, livelihood and education.

"I was very impressed by the CSR activities of Habitat. That made me think of taking Habitat's infrastructure to help me to my own projects," Thadeusyng says.

That gave rise to Project Bana, which was set up last year to help uplift the lives of pre-school and primary students in public schools.

In Bulacan, Thadeusyng shells out his own money to keep 40 children in the elementary schools in class.

He says his only requirement was that the students be in most need of help. Thadeusyng even spends for their lunch because he believes that students cannot learn on empty stomachs.

"It's possible, I plan to support them all the way to their grade because I really believe in this project," Thadeusyng declares.

He is sponsoring the first 40 students for another year this year and has added another 40 to his group.

Thadeusyng's involvement has encouraged other Habitat employees to take part in Project Bana and he is not exactly surprised because he says he has good people working for him.

"I am fortunate to have inherited a company that is in good shape. I am just building on what is already there," he said. "and the people here are straightforward, honest and hardworking."

He even refers to Filipinos as among their's "secrets" as only a few executives from outside the country know the caliber of the Filipino workforce.

"If I had known the kind of people here when I was still in Dow Corning in Asia, I would have seriously come here for re-assignment," he adds.

He even says that it was the quality of people in the Philippines that pushed him to come to work in the Philippines instead of taking up bigger jobs with a bigger salary elsewhere in the world.

Many others name Thadeusyng's easy business of his acknowledged success to open minds, aggressiveness and integrity.

A TOUCHING moment with a pupil

He may have taken up Chemistry in college but he did not intend to career there and instead learned to become an accountant. That was the start of his career in the financial world ending with his long stint at Dow Corning.

After bonding Asia for the company, he moved to the Philippines and took on the new challenge of heading a cement company.

Thadeusyng does not regret coming to the Philippines, and neither do his wife and two children.

"I love it here and it was not my mark of a culture shock because I have been living in different countries for 26 years," says the executive who often rides a bicycle from his house in Makati to his office in the Bonifacio complex.

He admits though to finding many Filipino dishes too exotic for his taste and that he misses eating good French bread and European cheeses.

Other than those, the British national is happy with the prospect of staying in the Philippines as long as he possibly could.

Jan Thadeusyng circa 1970s

Making rewards redemption fun

By Corrie Salmones Mariona

WINNING NEW CUSTOMERS IS ONE BIG challenge, and keeping them for the longest time possible is another, perhaps a bigger one.

This holds true for credit card companies, especially now that obtaining and charging cards can be as easy as changing one's clothes.

For leading credit card issuer, Citibank, the key to winning and keeping its customers is its continuing efforts to always come up with new, novel and exciting offerings and meet customer demands ahead of its peers.

Among the latest of these innovations is its rewards portal—www.citirewards.com—which, according to the bank, is aimed at reestablishing the appeal of the Citibank reward system and make it stand out from the crowd.

Citirewards promises to do away with the usual "commoditized" and generic rewards programs. It offers not only an entirely different rewards redemption experience but also a wide array of choices and possibilities that suit the cardholders' preferences and lifestyles.

"At Citibank, our goal is to make our cardholders feel truly rewarded. We believe the Citirewards redemption process should be fast, engaging and exciting, not tedious," said Tarunah Chadha, country head, consumer banking head of card products, during the rewards portal's launch recently in Singapore.

In his presentation during the launch, Chanayon said the feedback the bank had been getting from the market had shown that credit card holders today were bored of reward rewards programs that provide the same mechanics and offer the same old gifts, leaving no surprises anymore to keep the program exciting. Cardholders perceive the goods available for rewards are of low value and find the redemption process inconvenient and tedious. Most of them prefer frequent flier points or vouchers so they can spend them on something they really want.

These findings and the continuing rise in the use of the Internet for commercial purposes prompted Citibank to move and make things different.

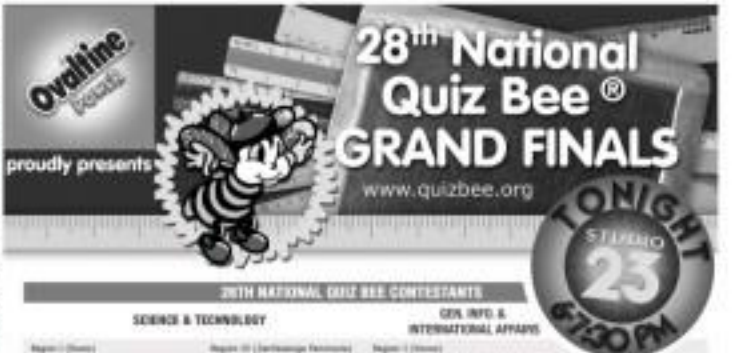
Using the Internet way through the Citirewards portal seems the most logical way to go for Citibank, considering the similarities in the profile of its market and that of the Internet users. Younger and better educated, have higher than average income, likely professionals who make important business decisions likely to travel both for business and leisure, have diversified financial products, seek innovation and will invest in luxury items, and enjoy a vast range of lifestyles spanning arts, cultural activities and sports.

Anchored on these, Citirewards.com designed to serve as an evangelist—ergo is to coaxing and would be cardholders a detailed listing of a wide variety of available rewards and endless possibilities on reputable ones. Adventure and challenge; charity; family; glamour and allure; entertainment; memories; satisfaction, and well being.

Under adventure and challenges, for example, one is presented not only of European flyers mileage for several airlines but also the various possibilities that will help a cardholder enjoy his reward points more such as travel packages to Phuket, Hong Kong and Sydney.

For the curious, the interactive center of Citirewards presents the latest menu of the

FEEDBACK: Asian credit card holders today are bored of current rewards programs and change here is in order.



28TH NATIONAL QUIZ BEE CONTESTANTS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Region I (Ilocos)
Dau National High School
Coach: Ms. Rowel Fragata
Contestant: Princess T. Galicinao

Region II (Cagayan Valley)
Cagayan National High School
Coach: Ms. Grace T. Pascualdoce
Contestant: Sheila Mae Mawanang

Region III (Central Luzon)
Bataan Peninsula State University
Coach: Mr. Jerson Jon-Jon Tipay
Contestant: Joanne G. Blanco

Region IV-A (CALABARZON)
Don J. Leido O. Memorial National High School
Coach: Mrs. Nelia M. Jaime
Contestant: Timothy Ignatius M. Anapion

Region V (BICOL)
Daraga (Albay) High School
Coach: Ms. Rhonda M. Bunal
Contestant: Cherry Gil L. Ermac

Region VI (Western Visayas)
Roosevelt Memorial National High School
Coach: Ms. Luz Delgo
Contestant: Joana Ta-asan

Region VII (Central Visayas)
Rizal Y. Bohol Memorial School of Philosophy
Coach: Mr. Rodolfo Tapion
Contestant: Adrian S. Sumaray

Region IX (Zamboanga Peninsula)
Dumalinao Agro-Industrial National High School
Coach: Mr. Joel Cano Sanchez
Contestant: John Cano Sanchez

Region X (Northern Mindanao)
Lugait National High School
Coach: Ms. Sheila D. Sitio
Contestant: King James Pacatiran

Region XI (Davao)
Mabini Comval National High School
Coach: Mr. Erastus Pepe Abis-Tinao
Contestant: Hannah April Gil S. Tinao

Region XII (SOCCSKSARGEN)
General Santos City High School
Coach: Mr. Jose Paulo Dale Cruz
Contestant: Charlemagne Jason Capellan

CARAGA Administrative Region
Agusan del Sur National High School
Coach: Mr. Anyanes C. Bondoc Jr.
Contestant: Jerrick P. Hinampay

Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)
Mogpog National High School Annex
Coach: Ms. Mary B. Cinpoeng
Contestant: Jhaylene Cris Balanquit

National Capital Region (NCR)
Philippine Science High School
Coach: Ms. Carol P. Flores
Contestant: Adrian L. Montajes

GEN. INFO. & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Region I (Ilocos)
San Carlos College
Coach: Mr. Randy M. Peralta
Contestant: Michaela A. Garcia

Region II (Cagayan Valley)
University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao
Coach: Mr. Robert M. Su
Contestant: Rodel Rivera

Region III (Central Luzon)
Central Luzon State University
Coach: Mr. Jay Angeles
Contestant: Ceri P. Jasalio

Region IV-A (CALABARZON)
National College of Science & Technology
Coach: Mr. Ranel de Guzman
Contestant: Mark Anthony Arroyo

Region V (Bicol)
Camalig Institute
Coach: Mr. Dave E. Pereda
Contestant: Patrick Labao

Region VI (Western Visayas)
University of the Philippines – Visayas
Coach: Mr. Wilmer B. Quisaba
Contestant: Victor Rene Emmanuel Herrera

Region VII (Central Visayas)
University of Cebu
Main/Lapu-Lapu Campus
Coach: Mr. Oliver Ojeda
Contestant: John Ray Bohol

Region XI (Davao)
Ateneo de Davao University
Coach: Ms. Leah Zamora
Contestant: Cleo Anya T. Ong

Caraga Administrative Region (CAR)
Ahia Computer College – Butuan
Coach: Mr. Lito B. Gandeza
Contestant: Samuel Galdo Jr.

National Capital Region (NCR)
Niugan Montessori College
Coach: Mr. Erick M. Cerna
Contestant: John Michael Rivera

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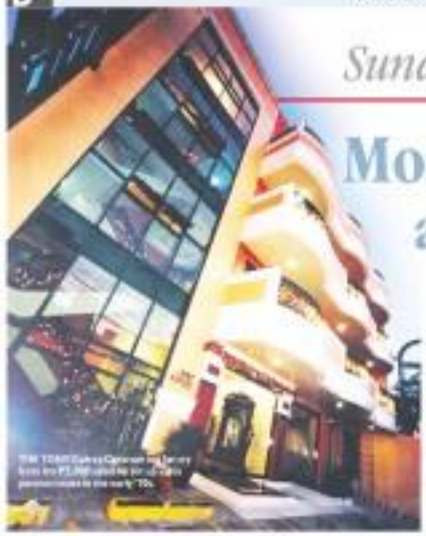
Sunday **BIZ**



More than just styling and cutting hair

Hair pro pushes for regularization of the salon industry

THE SCHOOL'S hair care practicum area

THE LOBBY

By Margie Quiroga-Espino

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, BEER was used as a hair setting lotion some four decades ago.

That was revealed by Tony Galvez, a salon and cosmetology school owner.

After being in the business for over three decades, Galvez has been pushing for the professionalization and licensing of "cosmetology professionals"—those who cut your hair, and offer such services as manicure, pedicure, hair spa and waxing.

Galvez notes that there are at present no regulations and guidelines in the Philippines on the practice of cosmetology, thus there is no protection for both consumers and cosmetologists.

"Malpractices, like burning of scalp and hair from half-baked practitioners, has created public awareness," he says. "But presently, the only section [upon for] the government ... is the closure ... of the salon that committed the malpractice. [There is] no guarantee that the consumer will be protected."

There are also no requirements binding a salon to enrollees in tools and instruments for safety reasons. As a result, customers may pass on their infection to other customers. And manicurists or pedicurists have no protection against customers who may have communicable diseases.

He feels that, when the systems and procedures are in par with internationally accepted practices, salon owners can command better rates for their services.

Galvez points out many salon owners are businessmen and not cosmetologists.

"Those ... who open businesses without [an] background on cosmetology end up in failures. Anyone who wants to engage in this business should consider education to learn the basics of the profession."

He put his advocacy on paper in 2006, by drafting a proposed House Bill on "An Act Regulating the Practice of Cosmetology in the Philippines," and submitting this to several lawmakers. The proposal was submitted by a lawmaker, but it had not been passed into law, and would have to be refiled.

Galvez prides himself in the fact that his Tony Galvez School of Cosmetology, set up in 1980, is the only cosmetology school in the Philippines that has complied with the standards of the National Interstate Council of the State Board of Cosmetology in the United States. NIC was founded in 1996.

Early start

Galvez's passion for cosmetology started as a teenager when he would assist his sisters in fixing their hair.

In the '50s, women's hair were curled when they stepped out of their houses. The 'in' hair do then was the "pistol look," according to Galvez, which could only be achieved by setting the hair and then ironing it.

Summers would find Galvez helping out at Toni's, a neighborhood parlor in Malabon.

"The owner was invited from the Ilaya province for evening schedule Toni.

He would hang out in the salon watching its owner cut and style the customers' hair and sometimes going with the owner to assist him during home services. He did not receive any pay but he did get lots of experience.

After high school, he enrolled at the Arellano University and worked on his degree in BS Education. Unfortunately, lack of musical knowledge in him to take another route.

"My father was only a carpenter, so I studied in a vocational course," he says.

He enrolled at the Placido School of Fashion, now closed. He laments that many of the fashion and cosmetology schools of the past have already closed shop.

The most obvious choice was a commercial art course, specifically Fine Science and Beauty Culture.

After graduating from Placido, he worked at Toni's for P2/hr salary.

"I was an assistant and I would hold a set of clips and rollers for a few weeks. Then I started hairstyling."

Investing his savings

In 1969, with savings of P2,000, Galvez set up a salon in his parents house.

"I had two mirrors, a fan, a sink and a dryer," he recalls.

He was a one-man business, sometimes starting his day at 4 or 5 a.m. offering home services, and closing shop at 9 p.m. But when the number of his customers increased, he had to hire assistants.

Galvez's first salon is a far cry from his current home, The Tony Galvez Centrum, on 9th Avenue in Quezon City. The multi-million peso five-story European style structure has school facilities and basement parking.

But for Galvez, the path to growth had not always been straight.

As customers increased, he moved to Cubao where he had to borrow money to buy air conditioners. He set up the salon for P150,000 and worked for 12 hours each day.

He says he sensed the first salons saturated in their classes emphasized the importance of strengthening their minds with messages such as:

- Your brain is like a muscle that can be developed with exercise;
- Just as a baby gets smarter as it learns, so can you;
- Everything is hard before it gets easy—never give up because you don't master something immediately.

The second group did not spend time talking about the potential to grow during class time. By the end of the experimental period, the growth-oriented group considerably outperformed the other, with several students exhibiting spectacular jumps in their test scores.

The Hendrix's speculate that a similar growth mind-set might help a person to enhance his or her leadership skills. They conclude their article by stating, "How you think about your skills—as fixed or growing—affects your success."

As an elderly farm widow, Grandma Moses believed in her ability to cultivate new skills late in life. Her attitude toward growth enabled her to create world-renowned art for posterity to enjoy. Looking at her life begs the question: What is your attitude toward growth? Are you constantly challenging yourself to improve, or have you settled for your present level of skill?

To read all of Dan and Chip Heath's article, "Leadership Is a Muscle," visit Fast Company at: http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/113/vol-onto-made-to-stick.html.

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or customer workshops, please e-mail us at bizgenius@gmail.com or call 413-2949/2732 (toll free)

GALVEZ

In 1969 with savings of P2,000, Galvez set up a salon in his parents house

TONY Galvez School of Technology lecture room

SHANG PROPERTIES ACQUIRES 1.5 HECTARES IN FORT BONIFACIO

SHANG PROPERTIES, THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT ARM OF THE KUOK Group in the Philippines, signs an agreement with Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. to purchase a 1.5-hectare property in Bonifacio Global City. This purchase forms part of the company's P1.1-billion investments over the next three years. Photo shows (L-R) FBDC's Fernando Zobel de Ayala and Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, Ray Kuok, Shang Properties' president Andy Tsuchiya, Taguig Mayor Freddie Tinga, and Marie A. Grosz of Alphaland Corp.

The classic debate: Born or made?

AT TWO YEARS OLD TODDLER, Tiger Woods golfed on national television in a putting contest against Bob Hope. Mickey Rooney had already won an Academy Award at age seven. Mozart composed a symphony before his eighth birthday. Surely the great talents are born and not made ... right?

A counterpoint to the stories of child prodigies can be found in the life of Anna Mary Moses. A widowed farmwife, Moses took up painting after arthritis rendered her unable to embroider. Beginning at age 75, she painstakingly taught herself to paint. After time, she began selling her oil paintings at country fairs alongside her price-winning pickles.

In 1936, an art collector discovered Moses' paintings at a pharmacy in upstate New York. After buying the paintings, the collector took them to Otto Kallir, an art dealer in New York City. In 1940, Kallir brought national attention to Moses by showcasing her art in his Manhattan gallery. Very rapidly, the amazing story of the farm widow turned artist began to spread. The art world was abuzz with talk of Grandma Moses' folk paintings, and the popularity of her work soared.

Moses would go on to achieve international acclaim, and she would be featured on the cover of Time and Life magazines. By the time she died, at age 101, Grandma Moses had produced an astonishing total of 1,600 works of art—250 of them after she celebrated her 100th birthday. Although she never painted until well into her seventies, amazingly, Grandma Moses is now considered one of the finest folk artists in American history.

The case for growth

In their recent article for Fast Company, brothers Chip and Dan Heath consider how people are affected by their attitude toward growth. Although they don't delve into the nature versus nurture debate, they do present an interesting case study in favor of a growth mind-set.

In the article, the Heaths cite an educational experiment involving the growth perspectives of two sets of junior high students. Over eight weeks, the first group was taught to embrace a growth-oriented mind-set. Lessons

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

Sunday LIFESTYLE

IN THIS ISSUE

- How to connect with teens /C2
- Sea Princess rediscovers Boracay /C3

Beware of IT stalkers

Social networks have made users a prey to hackers and identity thieves

By Rose A. Jacinto

MANY PEOPLE SHARE "secret" lives over the Internet, spending hours exchanging private information on social networks such as Friendster, Multiply, Facebook, Flickr, My Space, Fotopic. Some people, in fact, have multiple accounts via each one of these, with at least one bearing truthful personal information.

But like the heady rush of alcohol, it is so easy to let your guard down and lose composure in the pixilated microcosm of the World Wide Web. After all, when humans are transformed into thousands of pixels staring back at you from a 12-inch monitor, complete strangers will begin to look and even feel like long-lost friends. Inhibitions melt away. People who barely speak a word to each other at work, for instance, are engaged in socializing or are busy exchanging high-five's online.

"You tend to be more candid of people on the Internet. But if you don't really know the person you should treat him/her as a stranger. Use your common sense as you would in the real world," said Phil Ridley, consumer product marketing manager, Symantec Asia Pacific.

He said when people begin to feel comfortable they become susceptible to foul play such as identity theft and compromise attacks. Accounts in social networks have been used in some cases against a person's job application in the US. Sadistic, what seemed like a harmless game play between friends—hundreds of virtual "friends," in fact—become a weapon used each for character judgment, and subtly so.

"Do not assume that what you put out there is safe," Ridley said.

Identity theft, the fastest-growing white-collar crime in the US today, created an estimated loss of $3.2 billion in 2006 alone. When hackers get hold of your personal data they can do practically anything they want or do with it—apply for loans, use your credit and, more recently, even use your health insurance. But that's the easy part. The toughest part is proving that the transaction was, in fact, fraudulent. The hacker conveniently disappears, and you are left with a huge debt and a dam-

SPREE, C2

SPREE: Phil Ridley, center, Symantec consumer product marketing manager, with Smartmax Asia marketing manager Wendy Bruhns, left, and country sales manager Abdu Cruz, right, at the launching of their Norton Antivirus and Spyware software

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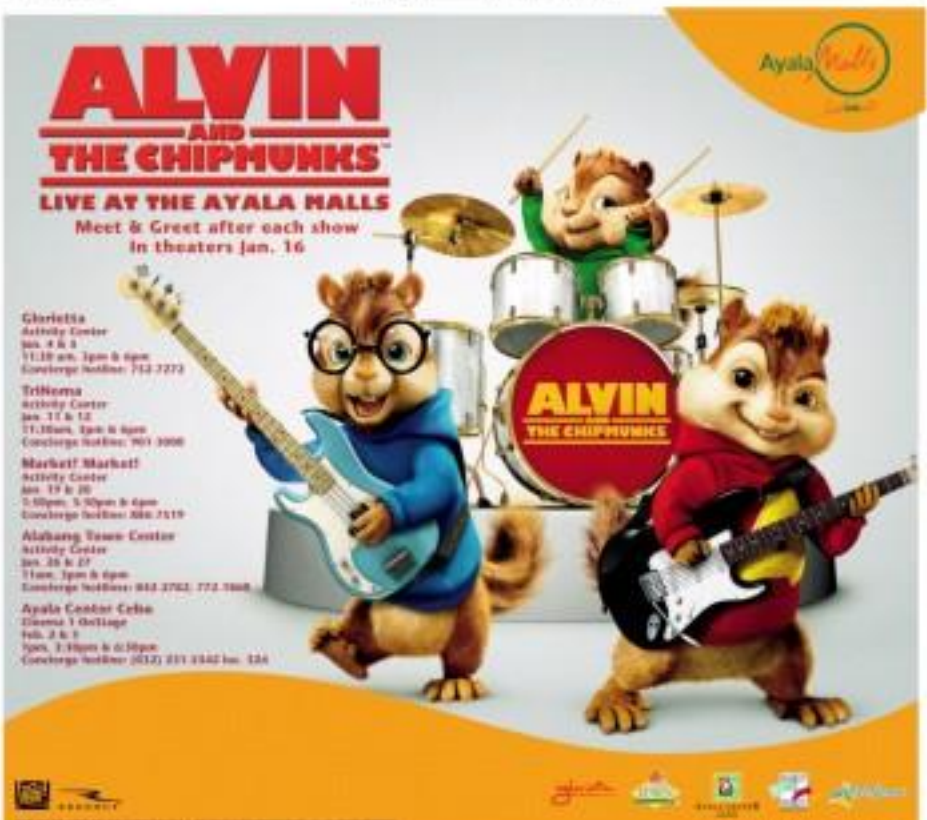

Connecting with teens

Teachers need to listen not with their ears but with their hearts

By Queena N. Lee-Chua

Teacher: Ana, why are you crying?

Ana: I don't want to talk about it.

T: If you talk about it, you'll feel better.

A: I got a low grade in the test.

T: You did not study that's why.

A: But I studied really hard for it.

T: Well, you'll just have to study harder. And stop crying. You're already in high school.

ON THE SURFACE, THERE seems to be nothing wrong with the conversation. Ana's teacher doesn't seem her to feel bad. But she dismisses Ana's feelings, and in doing so, the blocks off further communication.

In today's muddled world, it is harder for adults and teens to genuinely connect with each other. Many teachers are at a loss on how to motivate their students, and more than a third of our students have stalled over the knotty net with academics, but on how to communicate with their parents and teachers.

Many students are stunted. they have a real desire to make their studdens do well. But they complain that they don't seem how to "get through" to teens. Three loving and concerned teachers have no idea how to deal with their teenage students.

According to psychologists Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, many adults find it difficult to listen to teenagers express confusion, disappointment or resentment. "We can't bear to see them unhappy. So we dismiss their feelings and impose our adult logic. We want to show them the 'right' way to feel."

But what teens need most is for us to listen, not just with our ears, but with our hearts. When we recognize their feelings rather than judge or criticize, we make it easier for them to cope.

In her practical handbook, "How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk," Faber and Mazlish offer an alternative scenario to the conversation above:

Teacher: Ana, something is bothering you.

Ana: I got a low score in the test.

Teacher: No wonder you're so upset.

Ana: I studied really hard. And I still failed.

Teacher: That is discouraging.

Ana: Is it! But I will just try harder next time.

Teacher: That seems to be a good idea.

Ana: Yes, I will start taking better notes also.

Ana's teacher cannot take away all of her pain, but by recognizing her thoughts and emotions, she helps Ana face reality and deal with the problem.

No homework

Texts are no longer children, and they are usually quick to assert their rights. When teachers enlist, nag, or attack, teens feel resentful and resist all the more. Punishment may also not work well for teens, who tend to rebel or withdraw. Students need to handle tricky situations with empathy and respect.

When José does not submit his homework, the teacher says, "You are so lazy! Don't you know that doing homework is for your own good? I'll try my best to teach you, and this is how you repay me? From now on, I won't care if you fail. I've had enough!"

José replies, "What told you to care, anyway? I have other things to do besides the stupid homework. Ask Arnel's grades fell lower, and his conduct becomes even more frustrated. It may be wiser for José's teacher to try these four steps:

1. State feelings.

Teacher: I'm upset that you did not submit your homework. All the while I thought you were doing your best.

José: I am under a lot of pressure, with basketball and everything.

2. State expectations.

Teacher: José, please think about your priorities again. School comes before basketball.

José: I know, I know.

3. Show how to make amends.

Teacher: You need to make up for the assignments you did not do.

José: But that will take forever!

Teacher: You may have to give up a few basketball.

José: Even if there's a big game?

4. Offer a choice.

Teacher: From then, it's your choice. Either you can give up basketball till you've caught up with the assignments...

ILLUSTRATION BY TOY ENANO

José: I'm not giving up basketball!

Teacher: Or figure out a way to fit in both homework and basketball. I believe you can do it, and I can help you out.

José: You mean you can do some of the difficult stuff?

Teacher: Sure, as long as you don't expect me to do the homework for you.

Cheating

When José is caught cheating in an exam, the teacher says, "You cheated! You're expelled." José leaves and walks out of the room.

How can teacher and teen work out problems together?

1. Let teenagers give their point of view.

Teacher: Something made you cheat.

José: There were so many tests today, and I couldn't not study for all the subjects. I tried my best, but by midnight I was so tired. I decided that the only way I could pass the subject was to cheat.

2. State expectations.

Teacher: We expect students to do their best. In exams, we expect you to show us what you have really learned. We care for you, that's why it's important for us to know what areas you have mastered, and which points you still need to improve on.

3. Involve teens in brainstorm.

Teacher: Let's see if we can come up with ideas that can give you more time to study well, and at the same time not cheat.

4. List all ideas, without evaluating.

José: Go away with exams.

Teacher: Make tests you are tested for apart from anyone so you will not be tempted to cheat again.

José: Let us take home exams instead of doing them in the classroom.

Teacher: Do not schedule more than two long tests in one day is a good idea.

José: I can talk this over with the other teachers, so we don't schedule our exams on the same day. But since this has been caught cheating now, you need to talk with the principal and accept the proper sanctions. Since this is a first time offense, you will not be expelled, but in the future, we expect you to do your best, and no more cheating, okay?

José: Thank you, Teacher. Thanks.

Genuinely talking with and listening to our teenage students is the best gift we can give them. "Our problems need not be solved for us," say Faber and Mazlish. "Problems that seem insoluble can yield to respectful listening, sensitivity and persistence. Our teens need to feel valuable. Not only for who they are now, but for who they can become."

"How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk," by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, is available in Powerbooks.

Discover your fortune inside a cookie

By Marites Allen

THE WORLD OF FUNG SHUI (WOW) is home not only to the wildest selections of feng shui items and enhancers. Also available off your usual beaten path are those popular cream-colored wafer cookies, each with a piece of paper with a fortune message written on it.

They come in attractive red boxes with 12 fortune cookies individually wrapped in foil and are ideal in all fortune cookie lovers' quest to cap Chinese meals. The WOW fortune cookies contain messages written by no less than yours truly, making it exciting for a most delicious way to know and test your fortune.

This popular after-dinner treat is usually associated with Chinese meals and culture, but there are several competing claims on the origin of the fortune cookie, most of which is entirely creditable from recorded history. The following are some of those accounts.

The Chinese version

Some historians think that the inspiration for fortune cookies can be traced back to the 12th and 13th centuries when Chinese soldiers dipped rice paper messages into mooncakes to help coordinate their defenses against Mongolian invaders. According to legend, patriots revolutionary Chu Yuan Chang took on the disguise of a Taoist priest and entered occupied walled cities handing out mooncakes. These contained instructions to coordinate the uprising, which successfully laid the foundation for the Ming Dynasty. Another possibility is the Chinese custom when children are born for the families to send out cake rolls with the message inside announcing the birth of the child.

The modern fortune cookie

Although there is no doubt that the modern fortune cookie design originated in California, there is quite a controversy over who actually invented them. David Jung, a Chinese baker living in Los Angeles who founded the Hong Kong Noodle Company, claims to have invented fortune cookies in 1918—though no one seems to know where the recipe or idea came from. Another generally accepted story is that they were invented in San Francisco by a Japanese immigrant named Makoto Hagiwara. A landscape designer who created the Japanese Tea Gardens in Golden Gate Park, Hagiwara said the fortune cookie was based on a Japanese treat called tsujiura senbei. He adapted the recipe to suggest to Americans that fortune cookies made sense. Within a few years, hundreds of fortune cookies were consumed all over the world every day. The recipe for the cookies remains unchanged and their messages continue to provide entertainment, value, or words of wisdom to people who seek their fortune inside a cookie.

Trivia question

IN WHICH PLACE IS THE design of the modern fortune cookie believed to have originated?

a. Hong Kong
b. California
c. Shanghai
d. New York

For Smart, Globe and Sun subscribers: Choose from four possible answers to the question of the day and send to: 2881; Cali 4347666, 9187112, 4126000 or 09329-9389300.

JUN de Leon

Cards and calendar pay tribute to Filipino dancer

JAMIE Zabat

STEPS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION has launched a collection of limited-edition fine paper products that showcase the beauty and creativity of the Filipino dancer.

Tribute to the Filipino Dancer, in Red and White series of cartes-postale, desk cards, and the Flight and Form 2008 Dance Calendar, features photographs of Filipino dancers in performance, highlighting the beauty and strength of the Filipino dancing form.

They are projects of the dance scholars of Steps Dance Studio and well-known photographers Jun delos Leon and Jamie Zabat. Other photographers featured in the collection are Manny Baza, Tony Gatul, Dyleen Bernabey and Catherine Go-bel de Ayala.

"The project aim is nine fold: for the Steps Scholarship Foundation, which sponsors the training, transport and expenses of students; Steps Founder Sulu Zobel-Ekiaddo and she hopes to extend the support of the scholarship fund to more gifted but needy students.

Said Zobel-Ekiaddo: "I want to see what my dance scholars have done and are capable of doing for their own benefit. At the same time, I want other people who enjoy the arts and dance to be able to help them."

Over the last decade, Steps Dance Studio has earned a reputation as a top dance studio, using the principles and classic curriculum of the Royal Academy of Dance. It has four class facilities, highly trained dance teachers, and a roster of visiting fellows who are luminaries in their genres such as Nonoy Froilan, Agnes Locsin, Mai Luna, Frank Chiman and Cheryl Tiongson.

Tribute to the Filipino Dancer and Flight and Form 2008 Dance Calendar is available at Ayala Museum, Filipinas Heritage Library and Steps Dance Studio in Makati.

Call: 4910483 or e-mail us: info@stepsdancestudio.ph.

Beware of IT stalkers

From page D

sized credit sums.

Barkey, who was in the country to launch the Norton AntiVirus 2008 with Antispyware and the Norton Internet Security 2008, also cautioned against websites that ask if you want your passwords to be remembered.

"It means that website is not encrypted, and anyone can see your personal details and (passwords). Never do that, especially if it's not your computer," he said. Remember, if you can travel the world then your brains #C, you also allow the world to peek into your private life.

Symantec offers many cyberspace myths everyday. José and Jaime should be wary of:

Myth: Antivirus software is all you need. While antivirus does provide protection, having is installed in your hard drive will not suffice. Update the software regularly as new viruses emerge all the time. The more current your version, the better protection you can expect.

Myth: A hacker does not have a vested interest in your PC. Your hard drive contains your personal data—economic, bank details, credit card information, social security number. Your trusted alone is a wealth of information, with your address, telephone number and occupation. A very capacitous, etc.—mainly what a hacker needs to apply for credit cards or loan.

Myth: Hackers are only after the big industry players. Not true. Hackers, like the thieves that they are, look for easy prey. Big corporations invest heavily on IT, so the attention on your work-places are much harder to break. Broadband connections are usually easier to infiltrate because the static, "always-on" IP address can be easily accessed. Turn off your home computer when you're not using it. You save money, and discourage hackers from getting into your files.

Myth: It takes a real genius to hack computers. Google is online and you'll find a detailed, step-by-step info on how to hack computers. Hacking tools are readily available over the Net, and even explained in the simplest of terms for everyone to understand.

Myth: Dial-up connection prevents you from hackers. Using dial-up means your IP address is changing all the time, but a determined hacker could still break into your system and install a back-door Trojan horse that allows him to use each time you're online. And when they browse you're online, you become just as vulnerable to hackers as broadband users.

Myth: Mac is invincible. A computer is a computer and frankly, a hacker couldn't care less what brand you are used the platforms that come with them. They just have to look for open ports. The two Mitnick sites (see box as well), with hacking tools available on hand.

The Norton Internet Security 2008 now features Identity Safe where personal data are encrypted, making transactions or browsing online a safer place.

Barkey now leads a technology to tag infinitive this is a genuine website," Hickey said.

As for the social networks, remove all "sensitive" materials before sending out that applications form. And are your real world associates some, said Hickey. Invent secret questions, instead of real, brain strangers. The last thing you want is a stranger nothing you, to its real life, such experience can be one of your worst nightmares.

E-mail the author at ajandoro@inquirer.com.ph

VACATIONING family Mark and Gaye Lauret with children Alvaro, Sakina and Miguel

THE PHOTO-ion at Pearlmia Private's Boracay hideaway

THE FAMILY that feeds Mae's, don Tessa's on holiday

HOT chocolate couple Karelle and Dingdong Dantes

BORA girl Freida Gloria

DISCOVERY Shores GM Jun Parreno, Jr. with angel wall

BORACAY Tropics GM Ramon Paridaen

Speechless in Boracay

THE PICTURE Company family Eileen Grey and her boys Rafa and Joaquin

WELCOME 2008! Why does time breeze by when you're on vacation? Before you know it, you're faced with the difficult task of getting us to work mode the day after New Year's. And if you've been lucky enough to be vacationing in paradise, then it's doubly challenging.

For our family, New Year's in Boracay was a first, since we had been spending it in Tagaytay for the past decade. We were lucky to get bookings in Discovery Shores (visit www.discoveryislandsboracay.com).

My officemate husband, Fernando, had made arrangements as early as April directly with Cynthia Tia, the wife of Boboi Tia, one of the owner's cousins. Cynthia was an old friend of his from high school. Planning ahead is so fashionably Pinoy like me would just try to sneak our way in with a phone call and a smile.

Which is probably why he prefers to be in charge of planning! Apparently Discovery was fully booked as early as April, what with its well-appointed rooms, exceptional food and service, and growing reputation as the hideaway pampering.

We were greeted with perfect sunny weather, as our 20-minute Asian plane ride touched down at Caticlan airport. Dennis had brought three tickets eight months ago as well! In contrast, I don't even know what I'll be doing tomorrow!

We were pleased to be driven aside on the resort's air-conditioned shuttle boat with Discovery's corporate lawyer, Nonoy Tan, and his family. Nonoy told us about his "tubitan," Interworks, a family business that makes fireworks. One of their clients is the SM Mall of Asia, which has a fireworks display every Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.

Upon arrival, the friendly staff welcomed us with a welcome fruit concoction while tapping a refreshing powder drink. It's hard to focus on the concierge though, when the kids are jumping up and down on the lush fluffy down comforters, coughing up the personalized, monogrammed pillows, and eyeing them over through the complimentary dried fruits and cookies.

Our room were in the quieter area of the resort behind the grand waterfall. Although further from the pool and dining area, these rooms have a better view of the unspoiled sunsets. Nearby is an Asian Pilipel wedding venue, an outdoorsier set-piece where one can sometimes a wish on the fly the stars, to be granted when the sun dries it up.

Sand sculptures

The sand in Boracay is perfect for sculpting. Dennis and my daughter, Anesha, worked on a life-size little sand mound while my son Simon built his own sand castle with similar effects as well as perfectly formed sand crocodiles. Meanwhile, two-year-old Athena was busy just covering herself with sand. She enjoyed this the time around, maybe because she was less annoyed with the sand in between her little toes.

While my kids were enjoying the sea, sand and sun, I was able to attend Ashtanga yoga sessions organized by Maya Manalo (www.mayamanalo.com) at their hotel, The Yoga Mistic. It gave me three in full force, giving bruised-by classes to all those wanting to shed off a few holiday pounds. Both yoga goddesses Liana Reynoso and Berta Feliciano says spending the break with their families in Discovery as well.

It was a good way to extend my yoga practice this year. Accompanying me was Eileen Grey of The Picture Company whom we have our Christmas photos done. Also in the resort was my Bikram buddy, Chef Cyanogen. Chef Cyanogen's family pocket was set in Boracay). Anya Bernardo (www.anyabernardo.com), and temporarily residing in a new beach-back private but I'm sure we'll hear about the rest.

Massage

Nothing complements a hearty yoga workout better than a massage. The stress-draining Shambala Spa is now in Discovery Shores also, offering the ill-compliment of their services. Of course, it's cheapest to have a beach-front massage from one of the blue-and-formed hotel masseuses on the beach, but then that's the difference between a fiddle and a fiddle-ass, isn't it?

Nonoray is all about the beach though and the locals who worked with a set of beach-combers. With over 40 flights a day to Caticlan alone, the island is so busy in Manila's at Midnight Madness.

Among the many friends I met while walking onto the lush was designer Rajo Laurel, operating his whole family in a much-deserved holiday. Since there was small House of Laurel enterprise.

The other guy in my life, hairstylist Hakon Ortega of Emphasis Salon, was also among the blondebies on the island. Those hair specially opened a parlor on the main road, catering to locals with haircuts priced at P120 (he also does popular wedding packages, probably priced just a tad higher).

I kind of envied those with a holiday home on to be a family occasion? I met a pack of Fenton partying at Freida's, mom Pearlie Perez-Sanchez has actually invested a house on the island for two years, and had all six brothers of the children of my Lolo Bibbo and Lolo Claudio Perez represented at a New Year's Day dinner.

Boracay Tropics and fireworks

Of course, when in Rome, I always pass by another love resort, Boracay Tropics (www.boracaytropics.com). Owner GM Ramon Paridaen prepared a sumptuous lunch with the PCP Bandits Entrepreneurs providing entertainment. The dancing band of brothers musicians was entertaining hotel guests, even performing on the beach throughout the holiday weekend.

New Year's eve featured the most explosive spectacle of fireworks over the island I've ever seen. All the resorts along the 7-km long beach end up their separate displays, and the result was a symbolic fireworks war seen as far as the eye could see.

I was literally speechless at the stroke of midnight. It must have been the culmination of the late-night partying, drinking frozen cocktails and screaming throughout the holidays that led to my voice vanishing. Thanks to Discovery Shores' GM Jun Parreno Jr., though, I soon had a supply of lozenges and ginger tea to get me back to babbling mode.

It was really difficult to head back home, but it's no easier thanks to good hotelsitter like Mitt of Sony who took one look at our luggage and wanted no excess baggage from Boracay's service!

All too quickly, 2008 has arrived and the heroes of Bora are gone. At least, until the next trip!

E-mail the author at sugarmoon@inquirer.com.ph.

BREATH-TAKING Discovery Shores, Boracay...

HOGA Manila girls Lianna Reynoso, Pearlie Sibayan, Connie Perez and Berta Feliciano

ASYL owner Chef Cyanogen and yoga guru Mara Aranda

COOL couple: Babe Peters, Lizza Arzaren and Bianca Santos

CHEF David Pardo de Ayala and wife Stella Rodriguez

COUPLE-ables Myrna Diaz and Andrej Wisniewski

DISCOVERY Shores waterfunatics Jim Paterson, Jr. and Annabel Wisniewski

BANDA Konsiyan performing on the beach, sponsored by Boracay Tropics

LITTLE Spice toddler on holiday Athena Viddo between Jenks Pierce and Sabine Go

NEWLYWEDS Bella and J.R. Bunsol

ENCHIRE on Paolo Pereira, Myleen Diaz and Bobbie Pereira

GAY friends Victor Ortega, Raja Laurel and Mandy Santos

STAMMERER voice lawyer Nonoy Tan and his son Bryan

COMBAT and Candy Tessoro on the way to Mandala Spa at Discovery

GOLFING couple Rick and Leslie Lewis

FRIDAY's GM Philippe Bartholomy and Bianca Santos

MAJOR BFFs Maurice Arevalo, brothers Rudy Perez and Mauro Perez

The bells shall ring again

BUILT IN 1952 FROM THE VISION OF National Artist for Architecture Juan Nakpil, UP Conservatory of Music director Ramon Tapales and former UP president Bienvenido Gonzalez, the Carillon Tower serenaded the UP students, faculty and residents with its sweet melodious music.

The Carillon, according to Maria Cuerg, member of UP Alumni Association secretariat, was a significant part of the University life during their time. "The bells play beautifully twice a day but there came a point when it finally broke down," said Cuerg.

Through the efforts of the UP Alumni Association (UPAA), the UP Carillon Restoration Project was launched in June 2005 during the 92nd Alumni Homecoming.

The restoration of the Carillon Tower was the flagship project of the UPAA in recelebration of the centennial year of the University.

Close to P20 million has been raised to restore the 330-foot towering landmark and its surroundings.

The first phase of the UP Carillon Restoration Project was completed with the arrival of 36 new bells from Asslind on Dec. 4. With officers of the Alumni Association in attendance, the bells were blessed by Father Rosvicel Arre, who said, "The Carillon will call us again in this great movement like it has done in the past."

A bundle of wire was broken for good luck by UPAA president Nonoman Rivera before the final installation of the bells. The 66 original bells, forged by the famous van Bergen Company of Netherlands, will be replaced by the new bells made by Petit and Fritsen B.V. from Belgium.

The 15-million bells are made from 80 percent bronze, with the largest bell weighing four to five tons.

According to Engr. Mary Borgen and Eddie Ira, head of the restoration of the tower, the goal is to also replace the old clavier keyboard with a new one made of oak wood. They also envision the playing of the music to be fully computerized to enable the bells to play autonomically at specific times during the day.

The 12 remaining bells are set to arrive to complete the 48 bells which will be installed in the tower. Soon, beautiful music will again resound throughout the entire University.

The second phase of the UP Carillon restoration Project includes the construction of the Carillon Plaza, where the surrounding around the tower will be constructed into an amphitheater-inspired formation where people can watch and enjoy world-class concerts and performances.

The Carillon Tower will be officially launched on Jan. 8, the start of the UP centennial celebrations. During this time, the bells will once again be heard and will uplift the spirits of the entire UP community for the next hundred years. Interested parties who wish to donate and contribute to this project may contact the UP Alumni Association Ltd. 9306871 or 9208257). for more information, visit www.upalumni.org.

PONCIANO Rivera, acting president of UPAA, breaking a bottle of wine for good luck with Rufino Jorge, program chair of Restoration; Prof. Jerry Dalisay, project chair of Bells Committee and former carillonneur; UPAA executive director Frank Cornejo and Fr. Raymund Arre

36 new bells of the UP Carillon

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SMART THE POWER TO LEAD

Sunday LIFESTYLE

IN THIS ISSUE
Limjoco-Vicente nuptials/D3

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couples, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and groom's/bride's present address (city and province). A month of the bridal gown (Cam., in the Manila, PO Box 2332 Makati Central Post Office, 1260 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and are not accurate readers.

BONDOC-VARGAS

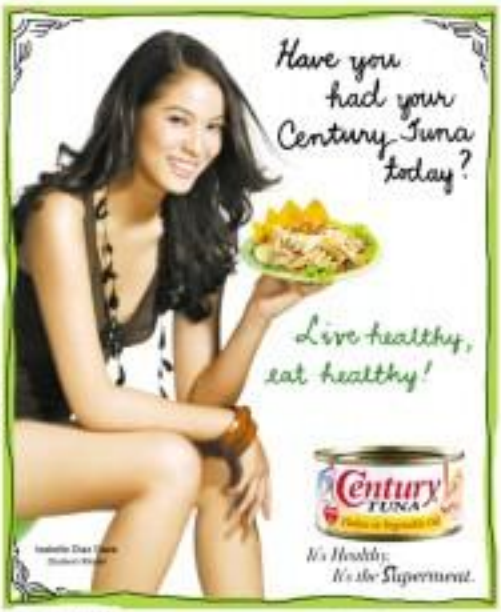
Christmastime Bondoc, son of Rogelio and Ma Rosalie, recently wed Aimee Claire Vargas, daughter of Dominique and Florida Vargas, at the Holy Rosary Parish, Mayuan, Valenzuela.

OLIVEROS-MAGLALANG

Pierre Enrique T. Oliveros, son of engineer Felipe and Dilda Oliveros, will marry Wida Magdalena Wisch C. Maglalang, daughter of Domingo and Emma Maglalang, at 3 p.m., today, at the Basilica of San Sebastian Plaza del Carmen, Quiapo, Manila. Reception will follow at Balcarce de San Diego, Intramuros, Manila.

BELANTE DEBUT

Kim Alliance, daughter of doctors Emilio and Ines Belante, will celebrate her 18th birthday with a dinner-dance party on Jan. 19 at the Valle Verde Clubhouse. Pong Iris Pineda designed the debutante's gown in a stylized Heaven silhouette. It features a beaded corset in lemon-yellow silk and sequin taffeta silk dupioni, with a detachable shrug in sequin-gold French lace, embellished with Swarovski crystals. The tulle bib, dress-length skirt was done in yellow and chartreuse silk chiffon.

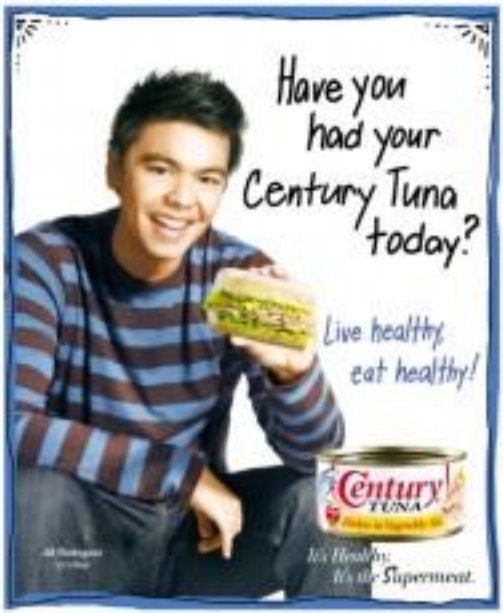


LIAO-QUIAMCO

Robert Liao, son of Mr. and Cecilia Liao of Modern City, and Cecille Quiamco, daughter of Ramon and Cristina Quiamco, of Mandaluyong, will exchange vows on Jan. 26 at the St. Jerome Emiliani de San Nicolas Parish Church, Alabang, Muntinlupa. Edmar Cameron de signed the bridal gown. Reception will follow at Ponderas Clubhouse, Alabang. Food is provided by Hi-Lite Catering.

SISON-BALAGOT

Gerard Sison, son of Gerson and Lorita Sison, recently wed Michelle Balagot, daughter of Ramon and Ramona Balagot, at the Instituto de San Jose, East Grenadilla, Mandaluyong. Reception will follow at Black Pitch Golf and Country Club, Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong.



KARAAN-GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Fernando and Antonia Karaan celebrated their golden anniversary on Jan. 6 at Sanctuario de St. Paul, San Antonio Village, Makati. Paulina designed Ben Farinas created a white chiffon gown with handcrafted beadwork for Antonia. Reception was held at The Peninsula Manila.

GO-BARTOLOME

Architect Raymund A. Go, son of Ben Jamin and Rolinda Go, recently wed Anna Cecilia Bartolome, daughter of Conrado Cesar and Maria Bartolome, at Manila Cathedral de Gracia, Makati. Reception was held at 1 Rajahmahi Bay Area, Pasay.

CABALLERO-FERNANDEZ

Arjelo Caballero, son of Rodilio and Marilou Caballero, and med Christine Fernandez, daughter of Efraim and Alicia Fernandez, on Jan. 17 at San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila. Reception will follow at Bahay Bianco Garden, San Agustin Church compound, Intramuros, Manila.

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Dorotan

Angel of the sick

Blessed Raffaella cared for the poor who were ill until her death in 1945 at the age of 83

I FIRST HEARD OF BLESSED Ma. Raffaella Cimarti when Fr. Dodo Mandoni said Mass at Immaculate Conception Church last year on the anniversary of her beatification on May 12, 1996), by Pope John Paul II.

After Mass one day, I went to her altar on the left of the main altar and asked her to help me with my eye problem. I promised to write about her if she helped me.

Five minutes later, I saw Sr. Cora San Diego of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy. The Italian sister of Mercy was founded by Francesca Taveras in Spain in 1856. In 1906 it has been in the Philippines for almost 25 years and, at present, runs the Bahay Kalinga home of sweet children behind Immaculate Conception Church.

A statue of Blessed Raffaella is also at the Manila Doctors Hospital.

Sister Cora told me she had received reports of miracles of healing. The major miracle that convinced the Congregation of the Causes of Saints to declare Ma. Raffaella Cimarti as Blessed was the healing of a little boy, Antonio, of meningitis. His parents prayed to Sister Raffaella.

Sister Laura di Iorio, who was visiting from Genoa, Italy, is in charge of the sick quarters, seeing her floors until her death at 83 years old.

Santa by nuns

Santina Cimarti was born in 1861 in Celle, a suburb of Savona, province of Ravenna, Italy. Baptized as Santa, she became Maria Raffaella at her consecration as a Slave of Mercy in Rome.

She was Superior in Frosinone, before becoming Superior of the Hospital of Blanes Later, she resigned her position to live her last years in humble surroundings and in prayer.

She died in Macer (Frosinone) in 1945. Below is a prayer to Blessed Raffaella for those who are sick or those in need.

For more information, please see Sister Cora at phone 7237172 or visit Bahay Kalinga behind Fronta Church. They will be there until March then they will transfer to Montalupa.

Prayer

"Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You willed that Blessed Maria Raffaella bury with a lively love for the sick, the poor and the needy grace that we might imitate her love for you and our sisters and brothers, and give us the grace to be faithful to this gift. We earnestly implore you."

Saint's birthday

Sr. Philomena was a Greek princess, only daughter of a minor Grecian king. The king and his wife were childless so they prayed to the idols. A doctor of their court, a Christian Roman named Publius, advised them "to be baptized in the Religion of Jesus Christ and pray to the true God for a child. They converted, along with other members of their court.

St. Philomena was born in 289 AD and called Lumen—light—because she was born in the light of the Catholic faith. She was affectionately called Philumena or Daughter of the Light, the light of Christ that dwelt in her soul when she was baptized.

She renewed the Holy Sacrament when she was 5 and, at age 13, made a vow of consecration to God.

St. Philomena considerately lights the path of our birth toward Christ, so we can also become sons and daughters of the Light. And, as we journey, we can also become a light for others as exemplified by her martyrdom and astounding miracles that cause conversion of souls. St. John Marie Vianney has called her the light of the church militant.

On Jan. 10, devotees will celebrate her birthday at Iglesia de Santa Philomena in Mint Holy Redeemer Parish, Del Monte Ave., Mother St., Maunlad ang, Quezon City. It will be the seventh day of the novena in celebration of her patronage feast. Novena is at 6 p.m. followed by a Mass at 6:30.

Training poor kids

The Tagaytay Tennis Club is training poor young kids at its court behind the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in the city. Jessica Abadiano Henrique and the club was also maintaining the court to make it available to the poor talented players so they can play tennis instead of taking drugs.

The club, with businessman Raul Aguinaldo as new president, held its traditional year-end tournament, the TCC December Cup. Winners were: men's doubles champions, Fr. Bernard Coquia and Dr. Marlon Sabastin; runners-up, Boy Armistad and Milo Valerio; mixed doubles champion, Buffy Gumbay and Mart del Delgado; runners-up, George Fernandez and Hennage; men's singles champion, Alex Villanueva; runner-up, engineer Gary Bernal; ladies singles champion, Jane Cooper; runners-up, Jeanni Asensi. Cebu Civic Club Region 3 director Hector Malonzo is the open singles. Special awards were given to Bong Bartiza, prodigal booster of NCDPO chief Gen. Cesar Bartiza, most improved male player; and to Isadora Henrique, most improved female player at age 12.

Virgin of the Poor

On Sunday, Jan. 13, Pandayan ng Ina ng mga Dukha will celebrate its 13th anniversary established in 1995 in Western Bicutan, Taguig. It is the only parish in the country dedicated to the Virgin of the Poor.

Fr. Ricardo Bitanjoyan was the first parish priest. A fiesta parade will be held at 6 a.m. followed by a concelebrated Mass by Pasig Bishop Francisco San Diego. Theme is "Inang Maria: Buklod ng Pagkakaisa sa Pandaya at Inang Pandayan"

Novena Masses will be held by priests from the Sto. Niño Shrine: Jan. 4-12: Jan. 4, "Mary, the Greatest Gift to Mankind," Fr. Simplicio C. Roman, parish priest; Jan. 5, "Mary, Model of the Poor in Spirit," Fr. Lorenz B. Sandoval; Jan. 6, "Mary, Mother of the Catholic Church," Fr. Blanco Sandoval; Jan. 7, "Mary, the Faithful Servant," Fr. Buddy Ven; Jan. 8, "Mary, Our Advocate and Coredemptrix," Fr. Jun Conrad; Jan. 9, "Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help," Fr. Ricardo Bitanjoyan; Jan. 10, "Mary, Our Lady of All Nations," Fr. Arnold Ebarle; Jan. 11, "Mary, Our Hope and Inspiration," Fr. Vic Viradores; and Jan. 12, "Mary, the Source of Salvation," Fr. Orlito Cadosa.

SISTER Laura di Iorio and Sister Cora San Diego of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy before Blessed Raffaella Cimarti inside Fronta Church

CEBU CEBU
Jaime Piconell

A revival of Cebu's Bachelors & Feminas clubs

IN 1918, 20 YOUNG ladies from good families in Cebu formed a company de galanes, enlivening many a social event with their music. Dancing Velez Diez and her cronies were among them.

A group of young bachelors, also from Cebu's best families like the Sanvicentenas Velez, also organized themselves to complement the women's group.

That was the beginning of the Bachelors and Feminas Clubs of Cebu.

The clubs had activities all year round, culminating with the Bachelors-Feminas Ball highlighted by a Rigodon de Honor. Each club chose from among leaders of the community a Mr. Pio and a Mutya who, with the clubs' officers, formed the court of honor.

Many 18 year old lasses, escorted by dashing swains, formed the consules of the society dance that traced its origins to the courts of 19th-century Bourbon royals in France and Spain.

The balls reached their apogee in the 1920s and 1930s. After a brief interruption during the war, they resumed in the late 1940s, gradually getting to splendor until the last ball in 1972.

The Musical Law years brought hard times to the Visayas, and it was deemed advisable to raise money for a ball. Mrs. Encarnacion and Pedro Sagrado, the last presidents, organized in Australia and the United States, respectively.

But the memory of the balls remained among former members. They also remembered the camaraderie of interclub, charity dinner, outings, and movie-ons to make merry. Romances were also kindled among Bachelors and Feminas, resulting in a string list of happy marriages.

FOUNDERS and Popes: Annie Mabri, Oscar Jereza (R)... Nandoni Lala and Ben-Hur Saldevargas

R.F PRESIDENT Perla Aguas-Peterson escorted by Junjo Ferreras

Valentine's Day fellowship

A year ago, Merla, now vice-president Personnel and Admin of Cebu and got 10-P members to organize a Valentine fellowship that attracted a large crowd. So did other activities that followed.

All efforts were directed to the revival of the Anniversary Day Ball and Rigodon de Honor. Officers were elected, committees formed, and lists drawn for Rigodon pairs.

Johannes Mangubat of Ballet Academy was a most patient coach. It and Bess Casquejo a most accommodating pianist. Tickets were sold, part of the proceeds going to charity. All 300 were sold before the event.

On the day itself, the Casino Rigodon de Cebu's ballroom was packed with an elegant crowd from the city's crème of society.

Members of the organizers greeted the Popes and the Mayors at the reception line—or the Bachelors, Rep. Ben-Hur Saldevargas and Rosalind Revilla Ibañez for the Feminas, Oscar Jereza Jr. and Annie Corrales Nicodemus Mabri, Antares Miss Philippines and Mutya back in 1968.

Herb was lively in a peacock blue tuxedo with gold trimming by an Cebu couturier Ines Sy who did several of the Rigodon tuxedos. Her escort was Josie Ferrero, who remains Cebu's most eligible bachelor. He's currently wife, too.

The rigodon started at the appointed time, 8 p.m. Cebu City Vice Mayor Michael Rama paired with architect Tessie Javier. The 1968 R.F presidents Vic Torres and Paulie Unabian Velez, as well as VPs Jun Matta Cuenco Manjarres and I, were escorts.

Completing the cohorts were Bill and Annie (nee Lim-Jong) Steel, Julian and Neba (nee Garcia) Nuñ, former Cebu City Mayor Alvin Garcia and his wife Noemi (nee Nuñ), Gino Rusty Kahlke and Eduardo Orais Jr.

Dr. me-couple were Chinggay de Leyte Urrutia with Alvin Escolanda, Anne Marie Uy with Dindo Bontemporo, Eduardo and Marilou Jose-Enriquez Bernardo, Fitchie and Emma Wee-Unabia, Ben Chiongbian Young with Gail, by Lopez, Marietta Padilla Matias with Jessie Escobesa, Ben and Betsy Jose Gaisilla, David and Betsy Young, Elsa Lucero fiancé with her son Patrick, and Dr. George Dueñas with Aleene Pariñagua, one of Cebu's leading executives, who wore her own creation and did several other venues.

Anniversary Waltz

Enthusiastic applause greeted the various phases of the rigodon such as the cascada, balsa, pina, waltz, viento, galanda, grand cadena and the apotheosis waltz, said to be done to a Strauss opus but one pianist was more at home with the "Anniversary Waltz."

There was much flurry at the buffet tables and paseo around by a cuerdas' picture. Dinner was served and in no time Leo Lino Lamoy and his band were playing dance music from the '50s and the '60s so the dance floor was filled. Some had to twist, hop and gyrate in the cat period area. It went on until way past midnight.

The next R.F ball is already being planned. This time, it will be danced by the "young." The "once young" have spoiled their enthusiasm for the world.

Something grand will be held in 2009 to mark R.F's 90th founding anniversary. Then, there will be a 10-year plan for the centennial in 2019.

EMILY'S POST
Emily Marcelo

Does he see her as a chance to get a 'green card'?

DEAR EMILY,

I am 20 years old and I work as a computer programmer in Canada. My family migrated after I graduated from high school.

My three-year relationship ended five years ago. I have dated a few guys but nothing has worked out.

My problem is this. I met this guy online who was introduced to me by a friend, who is in the Philippines.

We have been chatting online and communicating by IM (instant messaging), webcam and text messaging regularly.

I am starting to have feelings for this guy. I have not told him yet but I had thought of going to the Philippines to see him.

My parents, who are very conservative, told me to stop communicating because he would just use me so he could go abroad.

Can someone have feelings for someone she has not seen in person? If I am to follow my heart, then I want to go for it. If I am to use my brain, my parents may be right.

How can I tell which is which?

CONFUSED LADY

Yes, you can have feelings for a total stranger. How can you not when you are delighted with messages through online chatting, webcam and other high-tech tools available?

You may come home and give him up but it will prove nothing much. You will just be looking over an unwrapped package for a week or even a month.

He can impress you and win your heart by wearing his good intentions on a cloak of holy books and that will still be no good.

"The future...like unwritten books and authors underdress...you don't talk about it," said a very wise old man.

The crystal ball in answer your questions has not been invented yet and, until such time, there will be no clear and safe answer for you.

Don't you just hate doing an essay interim history test or what could be the greatest decision of your life? And don't you just hate it when you already have that in the feeling that this man will look past you—not the person in you—and see 1001 names instead?

Those are the sad and cruel realities of life, ladies.

You will never have any peace of mind if you are confused or overcome by assumptions. Let there be no regrets about what you did—but about what you did not do.

Cross that bridge of doubt already. Continue with your plans to come home and meet with him.

If you are successful, fine. If not, you can then move on.

All these fears are just blowing in the wind in all directions. You are only here for seconds if you treat the problem head on.

I am not sure about Canada, but the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service has instituted a final, proof policy in dating partners.

It takes a few years before non-American spouses of citizens can gain permanent status. In the event that your boyfriend only uses you to gain legitimate status, you have time to kick him out of your life...and leave his dreams with a pop.

Satisfy your curiosity and be done with it.

E-mail the author at emarcelo@philippinestar.com.ph. Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to Inquirer. Log on to www.gmtp.com and listen to Mr. Marcelo on-line the program "Kidlatan Fighters," 7:15-8:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, and Sat. 3-4 PM.

THE BRIDE and groom with their parents: Bruno L. Vicente, Charito Rubio Vicente, Cecile Corrino Limjoco and Randy Limjoco

GROOMSMEN and groomsmen: Vince Ivo Rovas, Pamela Vicente, Victoria Vicente, Vivian, Kenny Warren Herrera, Luigi Sison and Miguel Bichara

LIMJOCO-VICENTE NUPTIALS

Matchmaking mother finds her son a bride

VINA C. Mercado and Cecile C. Limjoco (seated) Melissa M. Madrid and Ramon Antonio

CHRIS Vice Rovas, who sang, with escorts Jamie Chodzko and Kevin Limjoco

CONCHITINA Lizbo, Margo Tumbocon and Boling Reyes

PRINCIPAL sponsors: Lourdes C. Martin with Mary Rapas, Merle Lizarra, Edna D. Lhuillier, Cynthia L. Carreon, and Ma. Dolores V. Ortiz

SECONDARY sponsors: Katherine Limjoco Sison, Tonya Picardal, Marlene Diaz, Vivian, Kenny, Jean Sison, Mandy Pichay and Mike Carrascoso; front: Mikaela and Keane V. Limjoco, children of Vivian and Kenny

LIMJOCO family: Luigi Sison, Kevin and Christine Limjoco, Katherine G. Sison, Vivian, Kenny, Cecile and Randy with grandsons Keanne; front: Ashley, Audrey, Mikaela and Marlon Limjoco

By Maurice Arnaiz

IT WAS THE PROSPECTIVE groom's two vivacious mothers, Cecile Corrino Limjoco, who suggested that her eldest child, handsome Kenny, be introduced to the youngest child of Southern mega businessman Bruno and Charito Vicente, gorgeous Vivian.

The two were introduced during his birthday bash almost five years ago by his sister-in-law and her future matron-of-honor, Christine Lhuillier Limjoco.

At the start, the couple tried to deny their mutual attraction and preferred to maintain a no-"platonic relationship."

But true love was inevitable for this super good-looking couple and, before you could bat an eyelash, they were saying "I'll death do us part" at a two elegant weddings at the church of the rich and famous, the Sanctuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, nonetheless.

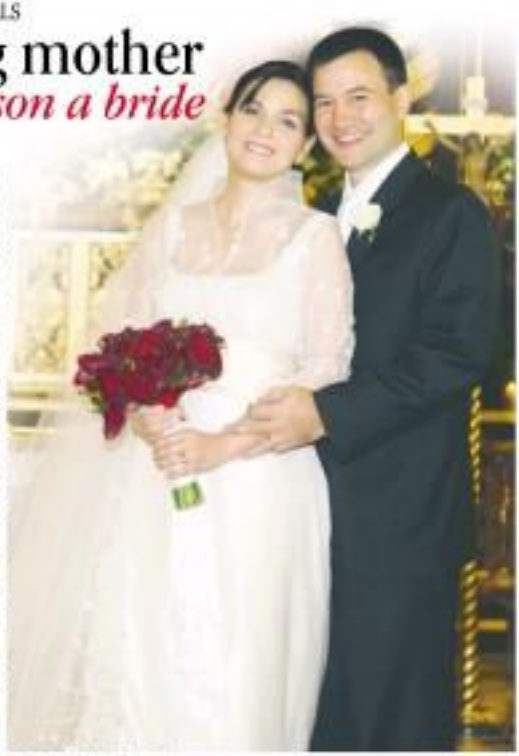
The Limjoco-Vicente wedding was the culmination of the couple's search for a soul mate.

Kenny L.'s best man, Lolly Lanuza, joined in from Colorado to join the old-world Viennese class that included a contingent of Socialites from Negros Oriental.

The wedding was the last for both lovebirds families so you could imagine how fierce the money-making was.

The church was gorgeous. An assortment of white flowers from roses to orchids, carnations, gerberas or camellias and easter lilies with green ferns, melon leaves and superbly done by Jun Sen, adorned the aisles and altar palongpos.

Vivian was every groom's dream bride. She looked fabulous in her gown by the unflappable Rajo Laurel as she walked down the aisle to the strains of Kenny G's "Forever in Love."



NEWLYWEDS Vivian and Kenny Limjoco

Picture-perfect

Spanish red (for passion) was the color motif for the entourage's ensembles, designed by Leslie Velasco. And, looking at the entire entourage, one would call it an elegant, picture-perfect wedding, dahlings.

Music in the church was provided by the superb St. John Bosco Chorale and the Hall & Quartet strings.

After the church rites, limousines, BMWs, Benzs, Jaguars, Toyotas, plus, plus, lined up at the posh Manila Polo Club where the grand reception was held.

Sunny and clear crystals were hung from the ceiling of the main lounge. The tables were tastefully decorated with arrangements of red roses, tulips, amaryllis and deep burgundy callas with melon ranchos, again done by Jun Sen.

In keeping with the Spanish theme, the entrepreneur spread, a virtual feast, had a selection of Spanish specialties carefully chosen by Kenny's adorable mother, a connoisseur. The wines and champagne were handpicked by Kenny's father, businessman business magnate Randy Limjoco, no less, to complement the delicious dishes, palongpos. The wedding cake was prepared by Wah Ching of the Starry Inn.

Once the bride band got willing and most of the couple's young attendees had downed their tequila, a mad rush to the dance floor began. Everybody danced till very late the morning of the nuptials.

And before I could even ask "how are the married love birds?" a week after the wedding, they were off to a dream honeymoon destination...romantic Europe, perhaps.

Ahh, dahlings, it is definitely this kind of a dream wedding that will make any staunch bachelor and bachelorette consider the idea of marriage.

JAIME Ocampo with Kenneth Qua, MJ Lopez, Kenny, Lolly Lanuza and Juan Elizalde

GERARD and Virginia Lana, Kenny, and Evan Hilbert

MARIA and Ike Miranda

CLINTON and Jacqueline Cuenco-Hess

IT ISN'T A FAMILY DINNER IF YOU DON'T EAT TOGETHER

It's back to the dinner table, says Lucky Me

The warm and wonderful tradition of the shared meal unites families and brings balance to lives. Look beyond the dinner table's literal function and you'd recognize a venue for fostering good values and open communication between family members.

The term family is encompassing. This includes anyone whom we have sought or chosen to be an important part of our lives. The make-up of the Filipino family unit is no longer limited to mom, dad and the kids. Sometimes, it's only composed of one parent or a grandparent or it's a bunch of people related by blood or not at all. No matter what kind of family you have, whether you've relatives or friends, one thing remains the same —you can always find comfort, strength, and love at the dinner table.

REALITY CHECK

In today's fast-paced world, the tradition of the family meal is being threatened. In many households, family members eat separately, according to their own schedules or in front of the TV. When something has to give, it is easy to let the family meal fall by the wayside.

And yet, this very tradition presents a time for strengthening ties and keeping track of each other's lives, and can actually lead to better physical and mental health of family members.

To eat together you need to meet together. Findings that as few as 3 to 10 families sit down together more than once a week to share a meal, not only suggests that families have become so fragmented that they're completely without shared time and purpose, it is ultimately saddening.

WHO RUNS THE SHOW?

The parent does. Children model their behavior after and mimic their parents' attitudes about food and eating. So as busy as you are at juggling work and family, keeping the ritual of eating together is an enormous responsibility.

The benefits of shared meals are many and several studies have illustrated that frequent family meals are related to better nutritional intake, as well as a decreased risk for unhealthy weight control practices and substance abuse. Children who ate family meals are found to have consumed more fruits, vegetables and fewer snack foods than children who ate separately from their families.

Kids who frequently eat meals with their families tend to do better in school as well. A survey of teen achievers showed that those who regularly eat meals with their families tend to be happier with their present life and their prospects for the future.

ROOM FOR CHANGE

There's no point in knowing all these without taking action. Family meals should be dynamic — an exchange of feelings, conversation and ideas, without distractions from the television, the computer or video games.

Dinner is not the only time families can come together. Whether breakfast, a backyard barbeque, Sunday brunch or a picnic, it's the quality time that really counts.

Start by setting a day and time for a shared meal, work towards increasing the time you spend together, and be absolutely firm about this aspect of family life.

Weekends are a great time to get family members involved, from the cooking, preparation of meals, to the setting of the table. When time is of the essence, you can keep meals simple without sacrificing flavor or health by sticking to nutrition basics.

Pick a variety of great tasting items from the major food groups for any meal or snack, and eat and serve sensible portion sizes, like open to trying new dishes and new ways of cooking food.

Make mealtime a pleasant experience, not a time for discipline or arguing about school or work concerns. Have open breaking bread with family and friends will help each one form positive attitudes and gain a greater appreciation for food and eating, while creating wonderful memories that will last a lifetime.

GATHER 'ROUND

Family mealtime needs to make a come back, and families must to get reacquainted.

The partaking of a shared meal should be a remarkable experience. A time when everyone gathers around the table, bonds with one another, and recounts the events of their day. Lucky Me! encourages families to restore this poignant tradition, to make time for positive conversation and for family members to understand and learn more about each other.

When something has to give, it is easy to let the family meal fall by the wayside.

Lucky Me!'s advocacy is a call to bring us all back to the dinner table — and back to each other through sharing meals and sharing lives.

Kalusugang Pamilya Mahalaga

HOW A SIMPLE MATTER CAN BRING FAMILIES TOGETHER

LUCKY ME!'S "KABISERA" TVC

The act of sharing a meal makes up a large part of Filipino family tradition. Every occasion ever celebrated involves some sort of gathering or another, with the abundance and variety of favorite food items and family dishes taking center stage. We Filipinos know how to throw a great party, and we also recognize how important these opportunities are for exchanging stories and keeping track of lives that often get caught up in hectic schedules.

But we don't really need an occasion to eat together, do we? Mealtimes at home provide the same setting for family members and friends to bond and get to know each other better. Unfortunately, the practice of sharing meals has taken a backseat in this fast-paced, modern world. This is the basis of Lucky Me!'s advocacy. The message conveyed by its TVC "Kabisera" strikes close to home — it is a reminder of the meaning of a tradition that lately has been taken for granted.

Jeunice Basic's Creative Director, Betsy Bilking, describes the TVC as "a sincere and honest spot that aims to make people realize a truth that a lot of us have rendered insignificant. Eating together has become so basic that we have forgotten how important it really is."

Raul Ona, the director of the TVC feels strongly about the Lucky Me! advocacy. Being a father himself, Raul says that his family considers meal times as a time to trade stories. "it is an opportunity for the kids to tell us about their friends and activities, to talk about books, shows, movies and travel, and to ask questions about life."

The concept is simple and straightforward as its message is: there are what you've been missing since you have not made an effort to be home for dinner. Elements shown in the commercial carry specific and significant meanings. The empty bowl of rice seems to say, "there are many people who do not have enough to eat, and are not as lucky as we are, so let us be thankful for our blessings;" the condiments convey the message "let's all work in harmony —*sanang dapla ng bukas para sa atin*;" while the unused table setting serves as a reminder: "you miss out on so much more than good food when you fail to come home and share a meal with your family.

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Surf's now up in Davao Oriental

The province where people converged to watch the first millennium sunrise is now hoping to catch a new wave of visitors

Text and photos by Jamie Dadis
Inquirer Mindanao

SEVEN YEARS AGO, DAVAO Oriental became known as the Philippines' surfing capital when locals and foreigners converged at the Pearl Point in Barangay Santiago in Cateel to witness the first millennium sunrise.

Today, the province, just three hours away from the Davao International Airport and Sasa wharf, is promoting its other side.

In September, the Department of Tourism-Southern Mindanao and provincial government launched the 1st Surf and Skimboarding Safari

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PROMOTING RP IN UK: Verna Buensuceso, head of DOT Team Europe; Rep. Nat Enverso; Philippine Ambassador to UK Edgardo Espiritu; Cheryl Enerio, tourism attaché for UK; and Rosario Alsang, London Tourism Office administrative marketing officer

Former UK ambassador says the country's attractions are appealing because they are unspoiled

COLORFUL: Aspiring rice makers hang all over the Philippine stand during the World Travel Market at Excel exhibition center in London.

RP's natural beauty draws Britons

Text and photos by Yasmin Baga-Reyes

COLORFUL AND FESTIVE tiklping from Lachar, Quezon, bamboos and royal palm trees, dried coconut shells, canvas and abaca chairs, and assorted posters of beaches and adventure destinations were featured in the ingeniously designed Philippine pavilion at the recent World Travel Market (WTM) at Excel Exhibition Center in London.

The Philippine booth's festive ambiance proved to be a major crowd-drawer. Sky flowing cowrie, mango candy balls, Choconuts and Tandang Sora-infused cocktail drinks completed the Pinoy experience for guests.

The Filipino's love for singing was demonstrated every evening through a karaoke showdown.

Staged annually in London, WTM aims to provide an opportunity for the global travel trade industry to meet, network and stay abreast of the latest developments, among others.

From the opening of the WTM, Filipinos sought to make an impression. The Philippine delegation, composed of nine operators and travel agents, Department of Tourism officials and Philippine media, left Holiday Inn Hotel in Gloucester Road on the iconic London double-decker bus, its side panels glistened with WOW Philippines promotional materials.

Others on the bus were Philippine Ambassador to the Court of St. James Edgardo R. Espiritu; Rep. Ramon Favian VI; Dominic "Chitoy" Enerio III, tourism attaché in the United Kingdom; Rosario Alsang, London Tourism Office administrative marketing officer; Verna Buensuceso, head of DOT Team Europe; Marivera Ballester, manila relations officer, Team Europe; and Group Secretary, UK desk officer.

The WTM's exhibition center said a record-breaking number representing 202 countries and regions participated this year. The number of delegates rose by three percent over last year to total 46,587 and international participation went up by 9.3 percent. Visitors totaled 23,892, a hike of 3.6 percent.

JOLIN bars with Wow Philippines logo welcome passengers at the London double-decker bus.

CLASSIC: London double-decker bus serves as promotional vehicle advertising Wow Philippines around the city of London.

IMTA'S Destination's Sonia Lacambra uses visual information with a British client.

PAUL Dimond, Chair of London-based Friends Philippines

Philippine participation

Over the years, participation in WTM has been a major activity for the Philippines, particularly the DOT office in London headed by Enerio.

"The Philippines again put its best foot forward at the WTM," said Enerio. "We always look forward to new contacts... Promoting the Philippines the best possible way is always our topmost concern."

Participation in WTM has always been important in the Philippines' drive toward economic development as tourism brings revenues and creates jobs.

"Global competition has become keener than ever, and the Philippines has been gearing up to be at the cutting edge of the travel industry, at least in asia and tourism-wise," said Enerio.

"By participating in WTM, the Philippines has [succeeded] in ensuring visibility for its tourism offerings in media, encouraging tour operators and organizers to include the Philippines in their brochures, networking with buyers and sustaining their continued support, and keeping abreast of the latest travel trends, technology and the state of the competition."

Above 13 Filipino private companies participated in WTM, including tour operators Lhuillier Holidays Inc. and Team, Imus Business Management, Rajah Tours Philippines, hotels Waterfront Insular, Eco Palawan Island Resort and Spa, El Nido Resorts, Sabaya Beach Resort and Spa, Amanpulo and Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, The Mandala Spa and Villas-Boracay), and Philippine Airlines.

Supporting the Philippines' tourism campaign were the Friends Philippines headed by Paul Dimond. The former UK ambassador to the Philippines serves in charity-big British nationals who have been to the Philippines and are willing to join activities that can help create a more positive image of the country and generate interest in trade, investment and tourism.

"I think the Philippines still punches below its weight in the tourism world," Dimond said. "The Philippines is underrated. It is not attracting the attention that it should. Why? I think it's historical. There have been many years of problems in the society [as in certain parts like Mindanao. But today where is it safe in the world? We are sitting here in the heart of London, which is a major tourism target, but UK goes on.

"The Philippines has many strengths that need to be given focus. The wonderful, sportsminded friendliness of the people, the natural attractions that are unspoiled compared with some other parts of the world where resorts have been overdeveloped and tourists go rather bored because one resort is one country looks exactly the same as another in another country. The other thing is that the Philippines is an English-speaking country so there is no communication problem."

Friends Philippines has about 250 registered members.

Staggering rise

Still, despite misconceptions about the Philippines, tourist arrivals in the country continue to increase. International tourist arrivals in January-September reached 2,263,093, increasing by 8.6 percent from the 2,083,783 recorded in the same period last year, the DOT said.

UK arrivals grew by 12.1 percent in September alone, despite warnings about travel to the Philippines from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Total British arrivals from January to September rose by 13.8 percent. In actual figures, UK travelers increased to 55,504 from 48,824. The DOT London is set to surpass 70,000 for the first time since 2000.

Among the British's favorites are Boracay, Palawan, Cebu, Bohol, Manila and Puerto Galera.

"British tourists keep coming in the Philippines because there is so much to see and explore in our country," said Enerio. "We are also famous for many specialized services, such as diving, golf, trekking, spa and wellness, and medical tourism. Visitors are also impressed and intrigued by our values, traditions and the warm hospitality that is uniquely Filipino," said Enerio.

Photo workshop in Batanes

PHOTOGRAPHER MANDY Navasero will conduct a three-night/four-day (P23,000) and four-night/five-day (P25,000) photo workshop in different destinations in Batanes.

The fee is inclusive of round-trip ticket, Manila-Basco-Manila via Asian Spirit, twin sharing at Batanes Grande Lodge and Restaurant, and three meals. Schedules are Feb. 22-25, March 6-10, 13-17, and 19-22; April 17-21 and 25-28; and May 9-12.

Navasero has a studio at Room 227, 2/F Dodge Plaza, 219 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Bupaco), Bel Air II, Makati. Call 899-7637 or 8926288, e-mail mandynavasero@yahoo.com.

Surf's now up in Davao Oriental

LOCAL skimboarder at Dahican Beach

Pumunta sa P2

in Dahican Beach, one of the best white-sand beaches the capital city of Mati has to offer.

"This is a fabulous province. We are hoping that Davao Oriental will become the next favorite tourist destination. This is the best place for lovers of nature, culture and history," Gov. Corazon Malanyaon said.

The DOT also launched "Surfur mars ni Boy" (Take in one beach, pal), a coastal management campaign designed to create environmental awareness among different communities.

Surfers and skimboarders are now common sights at the Dahican beach. George Plaza, the 24-year-old resident of about 15 skimboarders, said they used the sport two years ago.

"Dapa dapa lang na pag may competition sa isang araw. Ang iilan pad iila-pulayo dri sa area," he said [We went to places where there were competitions. But other people also came here.].

When a Japanese national saw their plight, he said, he donated five surf boards worth over 950,000 each.

Best waves and beaches

"We needed only us. He said are had the potential, we had the best waves and best beaches but tourism has not been not using the right surfboard," Plaza said.

Plaza said most of those engaged in surfboarding and skimboarding were sons of local fishermen.

So, even if a skimboard cost only P1,000, they could not afford to buy it because their parents were only fishermen, he said.

Plaza said the boys were elementary and high school students who practiced during weekends.

He said one of his trainees, 13-year-old Sunny Apatlo, a Grade 3 student already won in several surfing competitions. The youngest surfer in his team now is 9-year-old Jomer Monares, also a son of fishermen.

"Kuha dito, wala na sila ka isup-isporb. Gusto ra gyud skimboard. Bag-ak pa ang board kaysa sa iya para maguo ngo hasi, mas gyud sakad," Plaza said. ("They are eight kids in the family. He really wants a skimboard. The board is bigger than him, but he is a good kid and has talent.)

Foreign visitors

Today, the province has at least three diving sites and one surfing site. Unknown to many, these sites are already frequented by foreigners and they may be the next top tourist and surfing destination in Mindanao.

Irma Garcia, DOT Southern Mindanao regional director, said the department was developing new destinations and new skimboarding and surfing sites.

"The coast here is very clean. Maraming mga alagi ang mga isa sa aramid nga sa dile dri sa Mati. We hope that this will be the

JOSÉ BACETAN has sculpted the mysteries of the Holy Rosary for the 16-hectare monastery

TOURISM Complex (Plaza Hotel)

next tourist destination. We have great places to dive and surf here," she said.

"People can visit this place. If they want to stay on a weekend, we have the best beach. We also have the Carmelite Monastery," Garcia said.

The Carmelite Monastery in Barangay Matiao is a good place to visit during Holy Week. José Barrosa has sculpted the mysteries of the Holy Rosary for the 16-hectare monastery.

First resort

Garcia said a local Mati businessman, Elrol Ongos, had also constructed in Barangay Badas the first 50-room coastal resort in Davao Oriental.

Dapa sad, "Gaupo-otong mga dagat dri. Dapbang (sudsalo nga parapong lugar. Dri ay resort duoy can try fishing. We have bangus and dangit. Mi-ako have boating sa lugar." (Our beach is nice and green so as visit many other nice places. Here in the resort they can try fishing.)

Garcia said, with the new resort, Mati would be attracting more visitors. "It is a boost for Mati. Hopefully in the next few days or weeks, tourists will soon be coming," she said.

The province's famous attractions also include Pujada Bay, Mount Hoom, 17th-century Caraga Church, Cape of San Agustin, San Agustin Altar Cave, Manikiyo Village, Kinamayan Shallow Village, Mercy Stockton Complex, Provincial Capitol Park, Alimangang Falls in Cateel, Sleeping Dinosaur Peninsula, Calapagan Hotspring, Sigabay Island, Mt. Hamiguitan Range Forest in San Isidro town, Pujada Island, Manikano Island, San Victor Island and Lake Dumalneg.

THE CARMELITE Monastery in Matiao, City of Mati, Davao Oriental

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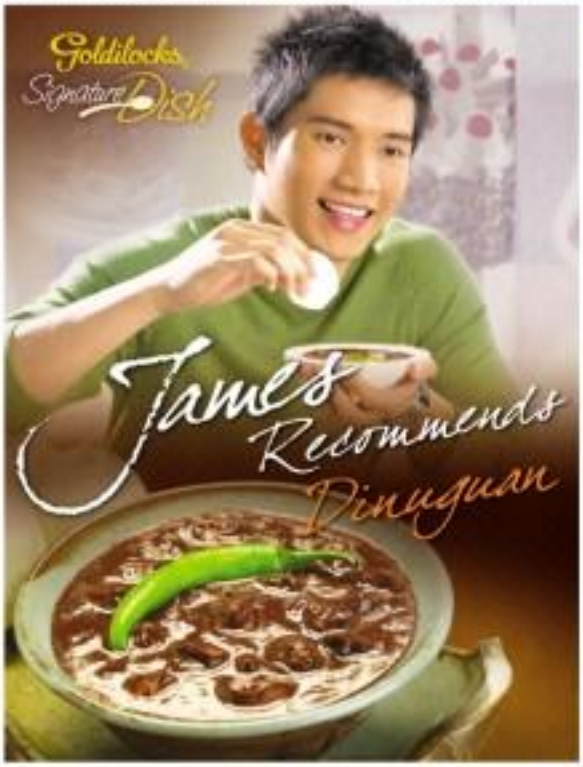


James is a Foodshop Fan...

Many people have described the ubiquitous dinuguan as "dalisay" or even "exotic", but James Yap has three precise words to describe this enduring Filipino dish all-time favorite. It seems the basketball superstar has very fond memories of the namesake staple, tracing back to the days of his youth.

"I remember noong bata pa ako, siyempre bawal kaming kumain basketball kung hapon," James recalled. "Minsan pag uwi ko, dadaan muna ako sa kanto para bumili ng merienda, dinuguan na may kasamang puto... Sino ba ka-talo-talo yun, eeeh sinaa..?Nagbaka na lang yung mga kalaro ko kung ano na nangyari sa akin, bahla hindi na sila kumain," he added with a laugh. "Of course at that age, ang sarap nga eeh ng kanin ng dinuguan, maghare ng basketball". Pero I guess mas masarap kumain ng special dinuguan?" he amused James further underscored.

Fortunately for James, his weakness for dinuguan was shared by the members of his extended family. "Every time may family reunion or special occasion, ang sarap talaga ng lamok ng mga cebanos ka. Of course, hindi mawawala yung dinuguan with puto, sawsawan mo 'yon kung bagu," he explained.

Given his tremendously busy schedule, does this home-cooked dinuguan taste now come as a rare occurrence for James? "Actually I still enjoy dinuguan as often as I want, tulad na lang ngayon," he replied in between spoonfuls of delicious meat and sauce. "It happens a lot kasi that I get the strong craving for dinuguan – kaya swerte ako that there's a Goldilocks in every corner. With Goldilocks, hindi ko kailangan pang dinuguan sa kinatitchon ha," the basketball idol enthused. "Yung Goldilocks dinuguan, sobra-masarap ang sarap. Hindi talaga mapantayan ang lasa!"

His bowl now empty, James contemplated for an instant before finally voicing out, "Grabe, ang sarap! Pwede na po?" Of course, since Goldilocks dinuguan was aplenty that day, the basketball star could satisfy his appetite as his heart's content. It seems that even for a three-X hungry athlete, one bowl of Goldilocks dinuguan is simply not enough.

...While Kris Loves The Bakeshop

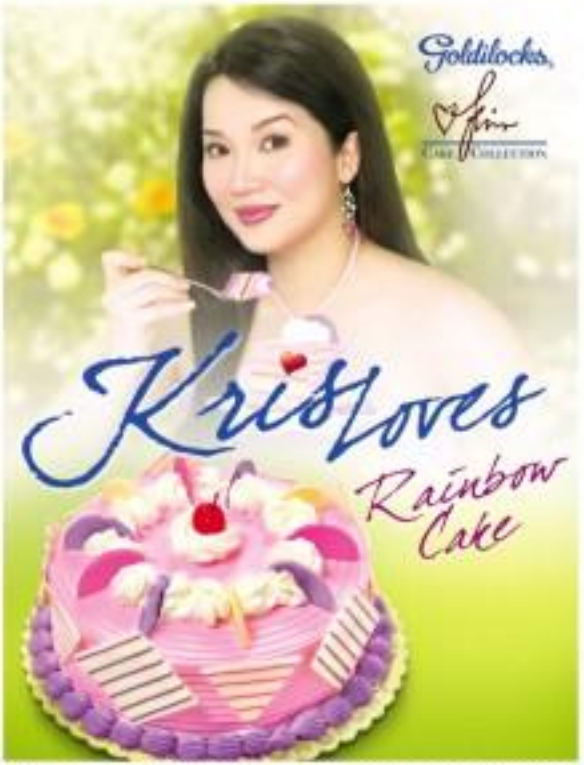
As she enjoyed a slice of Goldilocks Rainbow Cake, it appeared as though Kris Aquino was in a bit of a literary mood. "One of the most familiar metaphors in standard folklore is the proverbial 'pot of gold at the end of the rainbow'," the multimedia celebrity began. "In this case, no pun rainbow," Kris said, referring to the piece of cake at the end of her fork. "Tapos, to sweeten pang-resound... yung pot-of-gold," she added as the Rainbow Cake deliciously melted in her mouth. "Hmmm... sarap!"

It turns out that Kris was actually one of the first to sample the premium cake, even before it hit the market. "Texting please po ang sys noon," she recounted. "When I saw the Rainbow Cake – literally fresh from the cake plant – the first thing I thought was 'wow, ang ganda ng cake, colorful, enticing yung colors'!" Kris revealed. "When I tasted it, I knew Goldilocks had a winner. Sabi ko, the moment this becomes available, for sure it will be one of our bestsellers!'. It turns out I was right!"

Thanks to a delightful combination of visual appeal and exceptional taste, Kris was proud to include the Rainbow Cake as one of her personalized "Kris Cake Collection". When asked to describe what she liked so much about the dessert masterpiece, her reply was lyrical and imaginative. "Think of baking a rainbow and infusing it with sweet cake and strawberry filling. Then mag-strawberry whipped cream pa sa top, together with a sprinkling of different shapes and colors of chocolate toppers... heaven, diba?" Kris raved. "All of this comes together with layers of Ube, Vanilla, and Strawberry chiffon... it's truly a dazzling array of flavor," she added.

Fortunately, Kris has always been known to share her blessings, and today was no exception. "I'm sure all of you have tried the Rainbow Cake, pero sensitan niyo naman akong kumain," she explained as she cut several slices and passed them around the set. "Pati mister ko talaga ang Goldilocks cakes kapag merienda. Kapag cigar-enjoy".

Needless to say, the point was clearly made as a line soon formed to get a second serving. "Uy, magkano naman kaya para kay James, favorite din niya yan," a visibly amused Kris finally exclaimed.



ENTERTAINMEN

Julie Benete-Q. Yolanda

BIG SPECIAL

The year of living scandalously

By Reuben Sun Diego Jr., Marinel R. Cruz and Rochelle Concepcion

"Of course, I'm happy that I'm always in the news. Without intrigues, I don't have a career."

—Gretchen Barretto to a news crew, December 2007

THERE YOU GO. INFAMY seems to have become a profession in these parts—and it looks, as we recall the year just past, like a very competitive one.

Barretto's statement succinctly captures what stands like "career philosophies" of many media celebrities who hogged the headlines in 2007.

Hollywood considered on **Anne Nicole Smith**, **Britney Spears**, **Paris Hilton** and **Lindsay Lohan**—disgustingly if jokingly, admired to us a cable entertainment channel as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Well, the local scene came to town clutching about reigning disrespectful queens **Ruffa Gutierrez**, **Kris Aquino** and yes, Barretto.

Greta expectations

Remember: There was that photo of Barretto in a torrid lip-lock with **John Estrada**, supposedly taken in the house of **Rudy Fernandez** during a party.

The shocking snapshot was all over the Net in June.

In October, another melee of lacerating Greta photos with a more other than perfect **Tony Boy Cojuangco** was "leaked" to the media, via the World Wide Web.

Barretto remained intriguingly nonchalant. Named star, it was part of a PR campaign for her latest commercial endorsements—to drum up publicity for the model and the product.

It has to be pointed out that the skin-care firm and the shampoo that Barretto endorses are from the same global company.

The main Barretto wonder: Were all these previous controversies—among breakups, awkward clinchings—involving other shampoo brands modestly conceived?

There is another crucial and valid question. Will we be unable to endure more scandals of dubious origins this year? —obviously.

Good grief. 2008 is the Year of the Rat!

Hope springs eternal

Awards are in order.

Miss Guinagonan Soap Opera goes to **Ike Hope Contreras** (home: Tuplokan Aguinas dobob), akin to remarking that he's the fan (appropriately) in February Love Month.

The resident media retort case purgatorio-ist is Pooyak. Despite quoting verbatim the wrong, befuddled (or at least there's how he looked throughout the embarrassing three) "Tap in a less-packed boyhood and body-snub aficionados and laborers endeavour Contreras at beauty clinic inexplicitly-named-name-talk-show format.

Of the three protagonists, note that Contreras was the only one who reminded me to her pledge—as women to attend sociopathic after a brief flirtation with co-hosts. But she's reportedly back in town, looking for work. Hmmm.

Brutus, Olive Oyl and friends

Most Stunning Reality Show Zone threads goes to... Ito Ito Going Bekimon!

In May Stella Gutierrez and **Eliezer Stabilo** exchanged heated words in the media over alleged spousal abuse and neglect of maternal duties in May.

He called her Brutus. She said she'd rather be known as Olive Oyl.

No one wanted to be the Jane Popeye.

It was ugly and mudslinging, and everyone jumped in, or was thrown onto, the fisticuffs-free "The Buzz," "Showbiz Central," even the feminist group Gabriela and, of course, Gutierrez's progressive son **Arnaldo Ruras**.

Three days, Gutierrez continues to exchange calls and text messages with the man she has accused in a sadistic venture—who, by the way, flew into town for a brief kiss-and-make-up visit when the mood was close. Along the way Gutierrez bagged additional modeling, television and movie contracts.

The term describes her relationship with the "father of my children" as "complicated."

Sof Dot.

Again, one question remains unanswered. Where in the world is **Rabindranath Dakota**—the man Gutierrez supposedly married in Las Vegas, per Filmax?

Strange bedfellows

Stella's Vegas wedding to Dakota was timed via the same US government mole who has been subsequently shown **Hindi Lupit**'s meetings in Kuwait, **Yuri Park**, and Nora Aunor's supposed wedding to the manager and fellow female **Merle Sitjar**.

Kris crisis redux

Kris Aquino gave birth to son **Baby Aurora** in April. Even before the initial confinement in the delivery room for her could walk—he had co-starred with mom in a TV commercial and outdoor and had broadcast dialogue on a billboard!

Non-singer Aquino has also achieved the seemingly impossible: a platinum record based by a (2)-collection of cuppy love songs—sung by (guesstimate) actors and interspersed with bits of Nora Aunor lip-synching by the TV host.

Baby bonds sisters

The birthing to a harbinger of good news, for a change.

Pilipino **Rodjun Santiago**, son of **Claudine Barretto** and **Raymart Santiago**, was born in July, among the early visitors was sister **Gretchen**—with whom the mercurous had been feuding.

Baby Santino mended the fragile relationship, inspiring more hints to exclusive, on-film to Jaypaan Entertainment: "I am thrilled by the arrival of a new family member. Gretchen is such a joy. Did I give as a gift which made the trip to visit him worthwhile."

Amalia on the warpath

With a hilarious run-down 1990s Gang-pigmies star **Amalia Fuentes** sealed his steady three-decade meetings to public humiliation as **Joey Stevens**.

The quotable quote: "I am proud that [another] woman would still want that TV pass-old relic."

Against all odds

While other stars around them were breaking up, singers Ogie Alcasid and **Regine Velasquez** finally announced their marriage in relationship, via a string of well-orchestrated media revelations that ostensibly dealt out kibbitzes.

The fact that Regine was promoting a movie with **Piolo Pascual** didn't escape the radar of discerning media critics who were only too quick to connect the Regine-Piolo film's failure in the 6th with the reasoning that the couple got from stalled (albeit) relationship.

Angel flies the coop

After weeks of speculation, Angel Locsin decided not to renew her contract (duh) with GMA 7 and signed up with Star Cinema for a total of $4 million (P160 million) for two movies in August.

Angel's departure allowed **Dimples Romana**, **Marian Rivera**, **Maricar Reyes** and **Jennylyn Mercado** to land plum roles in Regine shows.

It also fueled the raging network war to lure prize-lovers.

Noontime war

Speaking of that war...

Willie Revillame dared regular **Joey de Leon** to a round of golf to see after the latter announced on "Eat Bulaga!" that there was shooting in the "Willie" segment of "Minamasan" in August.

Willie's on-air audacious made it to YouTube!

WILLIE Revillame

Dawson star! **Marissa Laguardia** had to step in and resume the shooting due-date when pub was so enormous and not engage their epic feast.

The many episode had a number appearances. A seemingly "suspicious" (Dra. Francis Escudero) showcase of the personal videos of Willie's "Whyuuuuu?" segment was again posted on YouTube in December.

Daddy Dennis

After nine months of heartbreak denials, **Dennis Stills** finally admitted that he was the father of Darlene Aguilar's baby, Gelyn **Andreea**, on "Showbiz Central" in October.

Was it purely coincidental that he had just launched "Dads" at the time? Nh-doubtful.

Daddy Dennis redux

Wonder of wonders, Darlene Aguilar's supposed confirmation with **Cristine Reyes** on the set of "All Stars K" was caught on camera in November.

The front of controversy? Who, of course, supposedly Carmen's cousin Ara Mina's son-to little sister promptly died a slander case against Darlene. But the girls quickly patched things up, leaving the flighty guy high and dry.

Libel and Lolit

Just as improper were Pido Pascual and Sixto Millan, who slapped Lolit Solis with a P12-million libel suit in November—for insinuating, in a tabloid column, that the two ABS-CBN lucrativists were gay. The case is ongoing.

Feuding over pirates

On the eve of the Metro Manila Film Festival, **Bong Revilla** and **Sen Sotto** were enamored in a verbal match over the fight against piracy.

Revilla was quick to apologize, but Sotto was remained silent. It was subsequently revealed that Revilla's camp was pressuring **Cesar Montano** to replace Montano's officer icon as head of the Optical Media Board under the post.

The prompted **Lee Hotchkiss**, head of the Film Academy of the Philippines, to quip: "Actors shouldn't be tapped to head the OMB. It should be a policeman or a military man, since the job is mainly enforcement."

Big fight

The battle against cancer is the biggest fight of actress **Rudy Fernandez**'s life.

Fernandez made public his ailment, post-transplant cancer, in March.

And as if she didn't have enough on her plate, Fernandez's wife, **Lorna Tolentino**, had to duke it out with **Francesca Sotto** over him in print and on TV.

Rustom vindicated

Rustom Padilla ("Zsazsa Zaturnah") met with **Mark Gil** ("Temyong") An Unan Hoi actor and, co-host, shared in an encore reconciliation with brothers **Robin** and **Romanni** and mom **Fox Cortes** on "Showbiz Central" and "Eat or Die Bed."

Final bow

This year, the industry mourned the loss of actors **Ace Vergel** and **Ramon Zamora**, scriptwriter **Rene Villanueva**, and TV host **Pete Roa**.

Last two minutes

Just in time for newspaper and talk shows' year-end reports, **Sunshine Cruz** packed her bags in a flash of Lupet's, leaving husband Cesar Montano at the peak of his holiday season allegedly because of a teenaged Brazilian model.

Montano went quick into denial his wife's interest in "another," and the refused to comment, to "protect my three little angels."

The shocked public may have overlooked the fact that ABS-CBN had cast the warring Montanos in the upcoming action series "Babae," set in primitive early this year. (Aha, real soon. Suspiciously soon.)

The last time Cesar acted up—remember the the Diana Zubiri encounter?—the couple was opening a restaurant.

And as we send to press... "Many people were surprised to hear the announcement that **Jennylyn Mercado** was pregnant by boyfriend **Patrick Garcia**"—such about the segment of prime time newsreel.

Oh, we weren't.

Thing is, we really wouldn't mind making—if the cast if the personalities involved bucked those up with solid pieces of work that their jobs demand require.

Like we after they can away together. **Brad Pitt** proclaimed "Relief" and **Angelina Jolie** did "A mighty sheet."

This is all we ask.

Ranking over ratings

The last month of 2007 saw ABS-CBN

THE YEAR IN

Regine Velasquez and Regine Velasquez

JOSH Hutcherson (in blue jeans) in Mt. Diwalwal, Compostela Valley

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Your life as a movie

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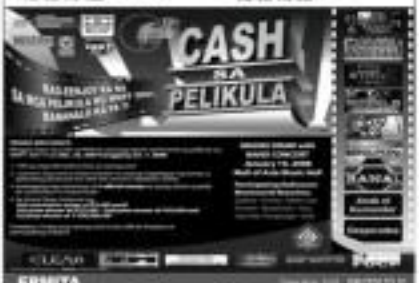
GALLERIA

1 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO – THE	6 BANAL
2 DESPERADAS	7 ANAK ng KUMANDER
3 RESIKLO	8 BAHAY KUBO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	9 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
5 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	10 ENTENG KABISOTE 4



ERMITA

1 RESIKLO	6 BAHAY KUBO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	7 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	8 BANAL
4 ANAK ng KUMANDER	9 DESPERADAS
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	10 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO

METRO EAST

1 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	5 ANAK ng KUMANDER
2 BAHAY KUBO	6 DESPERADAS
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	7 BANAL
4 RESIKLO	8 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

NOVALICHES

1 RESIKLO	5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
2 ANAK ng KUMANDER	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 BAHAY KUBO	7 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 DESPERADAS	8 BANAL

PIONEER

1 DESPERADAS	3 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

STA. ROSA

1 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	5 DESPERADAS
2 BANAL	
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
4 DESPERADAS	
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	

LIPA

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
3 BANAL	
4 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	
5 DESPERADAS	

DASMARIÑAS

1 BANAL	
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
3 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
5 DESPERADAS	

IMUS

1 RESIKLO	
2 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	
3 DESPERADAS	
4 BANAL	
5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	

ANGELES

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
3 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	
4 DESPERADAS	

TARLAC

1 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
3 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	

STARMILLS

1 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
2 DESPERADAS	5 ANAK ng KUMANDER
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	6 BANAL

BACOLOD

1 DESPERADAS	
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
3 BANAL	
4 ENETNG KABISOTE 4	
5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
6 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	

ILOILO

1 DESPERADAS	
2 SNAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9	
3 BANAL	
4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO	
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
6 ANAK ng KUMANDER	

GIA Calicdan and Ken Chu

JENNYLYN Mercado and Patrick Garcia

The year of living scandalously

from page F1

questioning the methods of ASD Nielsen in gathering ratings' data.

In a report aired on dzMM (AM) (DZY) AM radio station), it was alleged that AGB Nielsen had insisted GMA 7 as the culprit in the purported bribery scandal.

GMA 7 filed a P13-million libel suit against ABS-CBN.

H'wood encounters

Hollywood actor Josh Hartnett caused a major commotion in Mount Dinahoot in Mindanao while shooting the movie "I Come With the Rain," directed by Vermont's Tom Ash Wong, in August.

Hartnett spent a week in the southern province, where he was guarded by an army battalion, about 1,000 troops. The unusual (unnerved?) actor had to ask, "Do we really need all these men?"

Also in the cast were Japanese superstar Takayo Kimura, who also shot some scenes in Dinahoot for a day.

In Hartnett flew out, maverick Hollywood director Quentin Tarantino flew in.

Tarantino, a fan of Filipino filmmakers Mike Bonavera and Cirio Santiago, came to conduct a workshop, attend the Cinemalaya International Film Festival, where organizers gave him a Lifetime Achievement Award, ride the pedicab to Malacañang Palace, and have one massage after another.

Great beer, great Bazaraa

Further in July Chinese martial arts hero Jet Li visited Manila to shoot a beer commercial.

In November, the country played host to another Asian superstar—Taiwanese singer-actor Ken Chou (T4 fame.

In spite of his management company's reluctance, Chu accepted the offer to co-star with Ian Calicdan in Adolf Alix and Enzo Balcoon's "Barracks," shot in November.

Chu and Calicdan were subsequently declared "adopted children" of the country's northernmost island province. (Do wonderful stuff, "Gwo this mean I can buy property here?"

Ian in H'wood

Calicdan slipped in and out of town to shoot the Hollywood version of Tom Lazzaro' "Signal" in Toronto. Calicdan said working with foreign actors like James Bradford in "Signal" and Ken Chu in "Barracks" taught her one thing: "We are all the same."

Define "best"

Flashback: "Enteng Kabisote 3" storm, plinked the seemingly unthinkable—it was declared Best Picture in the 32nd Metro Manila Film Festival (2006), and promptly got the goat of the Catholic Initiative for Enlightened Movie Appreciation.

The film body of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, CINEMA, dismissed the history flick as "mindless, morally destructive."

Enter us. "Enteng" won the top plum at that MMFF, an annual outlawry through the festival, because of the "controversial sources" criticism. By the end of the film fest, however, "Enteng" had been edged out by Second Best Picture winner, "Pusod, Kusod, Kusalo" in top ground.

Best foreground in the 32nd MMFF, ongoing. As of Jan. 1, "Enkel, Enkel, Sakay," sequel to "Kasal," has overtaken "Enteng 4" in the tills.

Thank heavens for real industry news

IN APRIL, United president and chief executive officer Tony Gloria made Optimum's post-production and Optacident printing facilities available to independent filmmakers.

The program, first emerging directors

and producers access to the company's digital cameras and state-of-the-art equipment. To date, only Indie films "Kwal for Kim" and "Ka-tal" have taken United upon the offer.

Cheers and jeers

The past year was a good one for the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board in terms of enforcing rules and regulations, according to its chief, Mariana Lagumbay. "Movie and TV producers practiced self-regulation more intensely," Lagumbay reported. "Hindi na ako pumunta."

Still, the board found itself at the receiving end of jeers for giving X ratings to several short films and documentaries.

In January, former president Joseph Estrada's 'Jin-Administration,' 'Ang Maktabay para sa Hana' was rated X because the reviewers deemed that the pair about Nina J. tended to "incite political rebellion."

In September, the board ruled that "Sigaw," a collection of short films on human rights issues, was "for R-18 (or public viewing."

Last month, independent film "Metrobiz" and "A Day in the Life of President Aurora" in

TURN PAGE F4

The year of living scandalously

From page F1

THREE of the "Tribu" boys

solved "E" ratings, partly because a Government review committee found both films "libelous" and "defamatory to the good name of the President."

Indie revenge

The independent movie industry was at its busiest in 2007, with more films winning awards and getting invited for screenings around the globe.

A major breakthrough was the opening of IndieSine, a theater dedicated to alternative movies made by independent filmmakers. The movie house, located in at Robinsons Galleria, Ortigas Center, became fully operational in January. It is a joint project of the Independent Filmmakers' Multi-purpose Cooperative (IFC), and Robinsons Malls.

Also in January the Filipino indie filmmakers banded on the scene of "Daily Tigas," official newsletter of the 56th Berlinale International Film Festivals in The Netherlands.

Directors John Torres, Khavn dela Cruz, Alexis Tioseco, Raya Martin, and film producer Arlene Cuevas were photographed plinking indoor football with festival director Dieter Kosslick. The movies of the filmmakers, plus two other Filipinos, were screened during the week-long festival.

Winning streak

In May, Brillante "Bono" Mendoza's "Kinatay" ("Someone Died") won the critics' prize from the Federation of Asian Cinema at the Festival de Cannes in France. Mendoza's "Foster Child," a film on the state of foster care in the Philippines, had its world premiere at the prestigious Cannes International Film Festival, also in May. That film, written by Aloy Adlawan, was featured in Cannes's Fortnight section, which showcases the works of talented up-and-coming filmmakers from around the world. A total of 24 films were featured in the special section.

VIP guests

Still in May, Cameron Bailey, one of six international programmers of the Toronto International Film Festival, visited the country to watch local movies and meet with filmmakers.

Bailey who has worked with TIFF for the past 12 years, picked two films entries to the festival's 2007 edition. Mad Chinaglia's "Twilight Dancers" and Jeffrey Jeturian's "Sakal Kapatid."

That same month, Geoff Gilmore, artistic director of the celebrated Sundance International Film Festival, largest indie cinema fest in the US, also flew in to join a symposium on independent filmmaking.

In July Dong Kiamzon's "Dyan Ang," a digital film that chronicles the struggles of a man in her quest to educate tribal children in Baguio, received a rare endorsement from the Department of Education (DepEd).

Network's first

"Sindak: Ito Ang Simula ng Indie," (2007) ("A first festival of short films, was held at the IndieSine in July. A total of 14 films, products of the film and TV production and acting workshops in June and October 2006 and April 2007, were screened.

Workshop facilitators were Jeanbel Rivera, Gino Santos, Jeffrey Jeturian, Boboy Santos and Nanding Josef. Film and TV production were handled by indie filmmakers Jess Red, Raymond Red, Robert Quebral, Gene Hernandez and Paolo Villaluna, and TV director Brad Rayos.

Mauritius Film Festival

In August, Dennis Siaucian's "Love in Bar," a documentary on the state of Lapu-lu de Bay, bagged the Grand Chaillo award and a cash prize of P150,000 in the Mauritius Film Festival.

Nine documentaries shot across the country—from Mt. Pinatubo in the north to the Caribbean island in Southern Visayas—competed for the trophy.

Inquirer roundtable

Jim Libiran's "Tribu," which chronicles the activities of local film gangsters, won director Brad Rayos in the 3rd Philippine Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival.

Rayos-Libiran's daughter starred in "Tribu" as the only actress in Jim Libiran.

The honors headed a roundtable discussion on the Philippine indie movie scene in August. Invited were filmmakers Libiran, Auraeus Solito and Gene Cajayon, designers Cherry Pie Picache, Jesse Salbuecan and Dina Pantoja; post-production expert, Jaime Salud; Nestor Pabayon, cast expert, Jaime Salud; Nestor Pabayon, and film producer Ashmar Cuenca.

That same month, Rudd Oliven (Tribu"), Brillante Mendoza ("Foster Child") and Mell Sao ("Stand for Rent") were featured in the Montreal World Film Festival's "Focus on World Cinema" section.

Academy Awards bet

In September, The Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) announced that it had chosen the indie film "Donsol," by Adolf Alix, at #39 entry in the Best Foreign Language Film category of the 80th Academy Awards in January (this month).

Organizers of the Global Lens 2008 series in September also based that Arthur Aristorenas's "Babaeng Putik" ("The Hot Collector") would open this week-long film festival in January 2008 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

"Babaeng Putik" will be one of 10 award-winning narratives to be screened in Global Lens 2008, along with features films from Brazil, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Croatia, Iran, Lebanon and India.

Mendoza's "Foster Child" bagged another award in October—the Special Jury Prize from the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival in Scandinavia.

One-stop shop

In November, Malacañang issued a presidential executive order (EO 674) for the creation of the Philippine Film Export Services Office, which "shall facilitate the institutionalization of a one-stop shop system for foreign film and television productions."

"Neo-Lounge," a film directed by Jeanne Sangare-Aveng, was named Best Documentary Film in the 34th Brussels International Independent Film Festival held in Belgium recently. The film portrays the effects of the (1986) outbreak on people's lives.

In December, three of the eight Hollywood film producers who flew in for a wrestling visit pledged to make films here. "We plan to get assistance from local talents—action directors, set designers and cinematographers," said Rumble Lokkerbelle of Pegasus Motion Pictures PVT Ltd.

Feather in our cap

The Inquirer Entertainment staff, which covers the indies on a proper beat, find the scene dynamic, individuated in its environment, and therefore rewarding.

In previous years our picks may sound a bit note from acclaimed indie filmmaker Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil:

"Thank you for the wholehearted and enduring support that you have given to indies. No other newspaper, I believe, has given it as much space and importance, covered it as diligently, and pushed it with as much faith as the Inquirer. Ever heard us bias. I tell my friends at the IFC not to hesitate to approach your team if they have news to share.

"I think I can safely say that I am not alone here... all indie filmmakers truly appreciate the editorial commitment of yours to cover not only mainstream cinema, not only box-office and star-driven projects, which would of course cater to the majority of readers, but also small projects that may actually be redefining Philippine cinema. "That you have been giving it this much attention means you are our partner in making a difference."

ORANGE and LEMON

KITCHEN

MASCARA Ni Edgar

2007 that there are infinitely better ways to review cold soups.

Because it was always busy with concerts, the band Bamboo didn't have time to record a new studio album in the 2000's. "Light Rainstorm," first in all-covers work, "We Found Love Together" (EMI Philippines), yielded two gems, Anak Ninyo's "Pedrosyano" and Bobbo's "Tanodok." The first had a bustling, brass-like arrangement that gave more life to its original, while the second featured haunting guitars that lent more power to its social justice theme. Bamboo's brilliant interpretation of these classics redefined the template of how cover songs should be chosen and executed.

Top of the crop

But as far as crowning foreign material was concerned, Raymond Lauchengco's jazz-inspired "Full Circle: The Big Band Album" (Viva) was tops. It allowed listeners to appreciate, in a new light, standards like Bobby Darin's "Mack the Knife," Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon," Nat King Cole's "Route 66," Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up," etc.— which, in their original versions, might seem dated or have appealed to certain music consumers.

Still on the subject of covers, the strangest tracks in Luke Mejares' "Unplugged" (Star Records) and Sunny Mae Quan's self-titled debut (Viva) managed to sustain interest because of the great vocals. These are good albums that they might have been better had the producers dared to go beyond the usual practice of using programmed music. Marquez deserves a follow-up album, if only because his debut contained only five tracks. It was actually released in 2006 but is worth mentioning here, lest his producers forget about him.

Blame it on the bossa

A word on the local bossa nova trend, which apparently gets its sustenance on cover versions of just about any song that fits the easy-listening tenets of this rhythm-made genre. The reason that Bill Becomes such a big hit was not exactly her voice, but the memories she evoked with the songs. But this formula sort of went overboard in Sofia's double CD, which combined an earlier album, "Bossa Latina Lite" (Sony), with the follow-up, "Is You with Bossa Bossa." Gotta distract to have explored new territory ("bossa bossa" or new bossa), in which "bossa meets pop, jazz, dance and so on..."

The label sounded okay except that the literary were of course bound to ask whether Sony bossa nova artists were on. It is good to covering lotions and scampy all kingdom were.

The real deal

But Ellen Sioson and Cinemoto's "Absolutely Indie" (Viva) was different. Not only did it cover songs in Portuguese, it dared perform the music in some tracks with Filipino lyrics. A Sting Rebera original was also sung in Portuguese, which would be confusing for one who didn't understand a word of it. What Sioson and Cinemoto composed of some of the best Filipino modern musicians like Richie Quinzon, Michael Guevarra, et al. (warranted) in any way that the beauty of bossa nova like album has actually more of sambo) should be found in its native tongue. Since studied the language, went to Brazil to soak in the culture, and toasted professionally the music long before Mel and the rest rushed in on it.

Of course we don't have to learn the language to like "Matata Brasileira." The emotions expressed in the album connect to the soul in the same way that jog outlaws and romance affect everyone.

Best pop album

Synthesized proved it could offer more than its previous set of covers (Dodie Princesa, Gerardo's "Christmas Me Also," etc.) with the release of "Sweet Magnetism (ang Lahat" (Sony BMG), written entirely on original tunes.

But the best pop album by a band would have to be Orange & Lemon "Dissolve-Lucifer" (Universal Records). The creative tension between the band's main songwriters, Mary Daniales and Chris Cantos, resulted a production high here, with cleverly crafted music that utilized old music forms (the radio-based "Ang Katulad Mong Walang Katulad," for instance) and multi-effects in a contemporary work about an imaginary paradise where love reigns supreme. The last aptly describes the band's legacy after an unfriendly breakup.

Invitation to Ellen

Speaking of pop, four new artists broke into the scene by way of a reality TV search competition. The respective debut albums of Yeng Constantino, Jay R. Muñoz, Chad Borja's call released by Star Records) and Bamsie Laing (Universal) were fairly impressive. Each of these artists, born a couple of hits, went to Constantino enjoyed a head start since a number of her compositions "Unwritten Journey" "Salamat," etc.) had been airing on TV for the duration of the competition.

Fourteen-year-old Charley Pangangan was made it to the Ellen DeGeneres Show on account of the buzz generated by her YouTube video performances, captured on video and posted on YouTube. If you ask us, DeGeneres made to come over ... to find more prodigies like Pangangan (with the same style and possibly equal long praises) Nasa ang, a fourth-year band label and previously heard the girl and Nasa her to Stockholm, where she recorded tracks for an upcoming CD.

Noteworthy debuts

Two female singer-songwriters, Lala and Sitsyllia, delivered noteworthy debut CDs. Lala's "Isaac" (Planet) contained eye-pleasing melodies. Sitsyllia's "Mary Going Pinay" (Moreta Records) had equally good melodies and showcased the female songwriter's emotions. It could be quite affecting...we hope audio would allow more to people hear it by playing not only the carrier tools, a cover of the Havana duets.

Pinoy hip hop discovery Gloc-9 recorded a many-splendored "Unplugged" (Sony BMG), which not only showcased his 2006 words-a-minute rants-cum-rap, but likewise revealed the sensitive lyricism of rap music.

The college band Kamiga came out with its independently produced debut, "Our Only Hope." Riding on the strength of hope ("The Future of Pinoy rock," performed with Gloc-9), "Sinta" (Gary-on) and the adulation of its school fan base, the group displayed confidence with its sound influenced sound and meaning lyrics on teenage pain and confusion. However, it would definitely take more than one album before our can fully believe them.

Thumbs up, thumbs down

Another indie release, Neil Arellano's "Shmuddenbops: The Prelude" (released in 2006 but hardly written about) should be heard by filmmakers and producers. It contains materials that express different moods and emotions in the instrumentals.

Penny-ya in Filipe's late December release, "Solid" (Universal Records), offered a few refreshing takes on its patented boy-next-door music. The portrayal of relationships tolerant, relaxed stroke and gay pride in "Said Mister" was commendable, and the natural here to its adaptation of "Ang Pinakamasaya Sa Mundo" (Gary-on) worked. But those were more tricks than didn't push enough strength. Several numbers fumbled too much on shortcomings, and sometimes the human failed to take off (especially in "Cell Phone Walang"). Chito Miranda's acoustic-tinged cover of Eraserheads's "Ikaw (Is Still in Love" could have been done justice. In 2007 was the year when such a thing as Pinoy new-soul resurgent...with Jay Sharma Down, Adelaisa, Sino Siya? and Bimbo Bautista showing the way with fine albums to boot.

Feel bad, sound good

Which brings us to Amy Pfeiffelman, the British singer-songwriter who dug deep into her soul influences (The Shirelles, Motown, mainstream jazz) and came up with "Back to Black" (MCA), a thoroughly absorbing album that made feeling bad sound good.

Still about the past, a couple of retrospectives, Eric Clapton's "Complete Clapton" (MCA) and Led Zeppelin's "Mothership" (Warner) should serve as study courses on guitar-playing and lead rock appreciation to budding musicians and young fan alike.

To top it all, the 1970s supergroup Badgar recorded "Live Band Live at Last" (MCA), a new 24-track double CD that showcased the band's studio skills and the group's improvisation, not to that familiar folk-rock mixed that left us daydreaming. Will we ever get to see this band play at the Big Dome?

Foreign acts

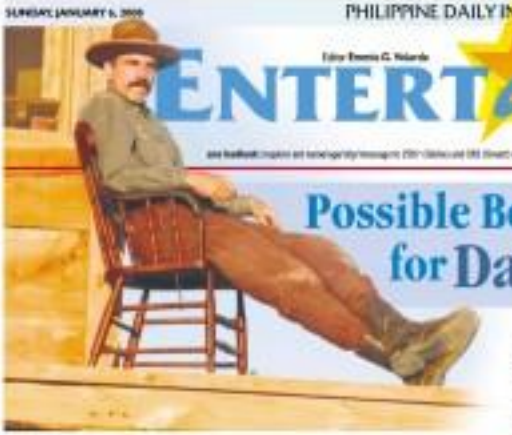
And speaking of concerts, it was apparent that the Philippines had become a viable market of foreign acts of every stripe—be it contemporary rock (Bill Duke Big Musical Hysteria), pop/idol (Christian Aguilera, Beyonce, Babyface, Taylor Hicks), hip hop (Akon), jazz (Diana Krall, Diane Schurr), retro (Neil Diamond, The Association, John Ford Coley), world music (classical and pop-opera (Il Divo, Josh Groban). All these gigs were well-attended by Pinoy fans from different generations. If our local promoters are really living in Manhattan sent over, then other rock and pop stars should follow suit.

Let's all HOPE into the new year year with resolutions and high hopes!

QUINTIN Tarantino

Edited by Ronnie G. Yolardo

ENTERTAINMENT



Possible Best Actor awards for Daniel Day-Lewis

LOS ANGELES—DANIEL DAY-LEWIS reportedly glared at Leonardo DiCaprio on the set of Martin Scorsese's "George of Save York" to help him flesh out the movie's controversial relationship.

Daniel, Best Actor frontrunner in this awards season for his stunning portrayal of a turn-of-the-century oil prospector in "There Will Be Blood," has been known to go to great lengths to fully inhabit his characters. For example, he learned to build a canoe from scratch and skin animals for "Last of the Mohicans."

In director Paul Thomas Anderson's magnificent "There Will Be Blood," the actor plays Daniel Plainview, who rises from a bankruptcy miner into a self-made oilygarch. As Plainview makes a hefty oil stake in a dust-town town, sensibilities ache, especially with a chum-mate preacher, excellently played by Paul Dano ("Little Miss Sunshine").

Heal, who was brought in the last minute to replace another actor who was not matching Daniel's intensity, also became the target of Daniel's glare.

"I'd like to think that we glared at each other," said Heal. "Although, leaving worked with Daniel since before, I knew what I was getting myself into. I was really looking forward to that. Daniel is obviously a committed actor. Some people think what he does is a bizarre thing but when you're there on the set, when you see it, it makes complete sense. He does what he needs to do to be the best actor he can be. I couldn't let him intimidate me for a second because we have to get at each other. We certainly kept distance from each other. I didn't feel the need to be super charming on the set with any body."

Heal also survived a scene in a mud-caverns bowling alley where Daniel threw real bowling balls at him. "I got

DANIEL Day-Lewis in "There Will Be Blood" (above left)—presents himself as a regular guy with tattoos and street clothes in this snapshot (below left) during a press con with the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. But his aristocratic pedigree lets the son of Cecil Day-Lewis, English Poet Laureate from 1968 until his death in 1972.

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Law special

LAW DEBTS '92s gathered in Batanes using mega-Frigidaire! ("Death in the Land of Enough"), the first 10 films/films to win a special Manila Critics award, Democracy Section, at the Sixteen Film Festival, will have a screening today, 1 p.m. at The Wild Bloopers Film Festival in Cubao X Machina Shoe Expo, Quezon City.

CANNES FEST '08 JURY HEAD

US ACTOR Sean Penn, more known as Hollywood's "enfant terrible," is set to head the jury of 2008 Cannes Shorts, organizers said in a statement dated Jan. 3. The world's paramount movie festival, kicking off on the French Riviera on May 14, wraps up with the jury on May 25 awarding the Palme d'Or prize for Best Film.

AP

DID YOU KNOW...

'Idol' charter, Pinoy version

"AMERICAN IDOL" has found a new home in QTV 11, which will begin airing the US reality talent search on Jan. 14.

Meanwhile, the lil local franchise, re-dubbed "Pinoy Idol," will be aired on ABS-CBN 2.

The rewards has drawn conducting auditions, and is telling the forthcoming doesn't write out in TV ads as the "First Pinoy Idol."

This could be rite—and for good reason—the hosts of first season champ Mau Marcelo, who joined and won "Philippine Idol" the year we didn't. That she'd be erased from the Kapuso network's version of local "Idol" history.

Reports from Ringo de

PG-13

OPENS JANUARY 8

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JOSH Groban's "Noel" was the No. 1 album of 2007, having sold 3.7 million copies. (AFP)

US album sales down, but Groban saves the day

LOS ANGELES—If ONE CHRISTMAS came a few times a year for the fun-loving US music industry.

Total album sales plunged 15 percent in 2007, and retailers waited until October for the year's top release, California scene Josh Groban's holiday themed "Noel," according to sales data issued by industry tracker Nielsen SoundScan.

Sales of physical and digital albums tumbled to 588.5 million units, as the music industry was pillaged by piracy and competition from other forms of entertainment like video games, industry experts said.

SPIN

Things are likely to get worse for the next four or five years, said music attorney Ernesto Rivas, a Nashville-based partner in Loeb & Loeb, whose clients include Sid Bink and Cat in Underwood.

Five-week champ

Groban, who records for Warner Music Group Corp, sold 3.7 million copies of "Noel" and topped the US charts for five weeks. His No. 2 album of 2007 was Walt Disney Co.'s soundtrack to the Disney Channel TV movie "High School Musical 2," with 3.9 million units. In predecessor was the biggest release of 2006 with 3.7 million units.

"It's an indicator of how far the business has fallen, Mariah Carey topped the 2005 list, selling almost 3 million units of

"The Emancipation of Mimi." The top album of 2004, R&B singer Usher's "Confessions," sold nearly 8 million copies that year.

Universal Music Group, a unit of France's Vivendi Universal SA, was the top distributor with 31.9 percent of total album sales, up from 31.6 percent in 2006.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment, a joint venture between Sony Corp and Bertelsmann AG, was second in market share with 23 percent, down from 23.4 percent in 2006. Warner Music was No. 3 with 20.3 percent of the market, up from 18.1 percent in 2006. Reuters

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL X	2 BANAL	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	4 BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO
GLORIETTA 4	1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL X	2 DESPERADO	3D ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
	4 ARAW NG KUMANDER	5 BAHAY KUBO	6 BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO	7 BANAL
GREENBELT 1	1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	2 BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO		
GREENBELT 2	1D SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL X	2D BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO		
	3 DESPERADO	4 BAHAY KUBO	5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1D BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4		
	3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL X	4 BAHAY KUBO	5 DESPERADO	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL X	4 DESPERADO
MARKET MARKET	1 BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO	2 BANAL		
	3 ARAW NG KUMANDER	4 DESPERADO	5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	
TRINOMA	1 DESPERADO	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4	3 BANAL	4 ARAW NG KUMANDER
	5 BAHAY KUBO	6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL X	7D BANAL BANAL BANGLOLO	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3

Greenbelt — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3

Alabang Town Center — Yoga @ Ice, January 1 to 30, Activity Center

Ayala Center Cebu — Ms. Cebu Online Voting Booth, January 1 to 30, Activity Area

Market Market — White O-Kpark Anniversary Event, January 9 & 10, Activity Center

Cristafer — Repertory Philippines presents Tuklasang Yamang Lupa, January 11 to 27, 2007

Ayala Museum — Gallery Tour Welcome by Jocelyn Sabio, November 24 to January 13, 2008

Tri Noma — Ayala SALE, January 4 to 6 Trilogy Activity Center; Rocio Rhythms featuring Harmon Grooves, January 6, 7pm, Level 1, Plaza

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AXN spins off AXN Beyond

AXN, AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ACTION and adventure entertainment channel from SPE Networks Asia, spins off a new channel with a menu that blends paranormal, sci-fi, suspense, horror and mystery/fantasy entertainment.

AXN Beyond serves up a lineup of drama series, movies and an occasional dose of cutting-edge features. On top of the list are the sci-fi thriller "Painkiller Jane" starring Kristanna Loken, the mystery/fantasy "The Dresden Files" with Paul Blackthorne and all-time favorites like "Ripley's Believe It or Not."

"The lineup has mass appeal, and the channel expects to carve its own niche," says SPE Networks Asia's general manager Ridzy Ose. He points out that AXN shows "Lost" and "Supernatural" have been raring well.

SPE Networks Asia recently signed the first deal with the Philippines' SkyCable, which launched AXN Beyond last Jan. 1. Plans are underways for expansion in Asia.

FEEDBACK

James Dean's first film

From Dexy Malvar (socmal@entertainment.com) of Sta Cruz, Laguna:

FIRST I just want to make a correction on Mr. Tiotio's column, "Face of Eden" is James Dean's first movie and is based on James Steinbeck's novel of the same title. Thank you and more power!

No overnight success

From Cristy Guiam (cguiam@abs-cbn.com.ph):

From the moment I saw Iza Calzado, I know that among the contemporary young actors, she is the most likely to get a break in Hollywood. Her Latina looks and acting capabilities is her passport to that. However, despite her flourishing career, I believe she still has a long way to go.

Iza's Hollywood image is yet to be determined by the outcome of her film "The Echo," scheduled to be released this year. Unfortunately, some of her peers have already considered her a "Hollywood star," which I think is not a good segway.

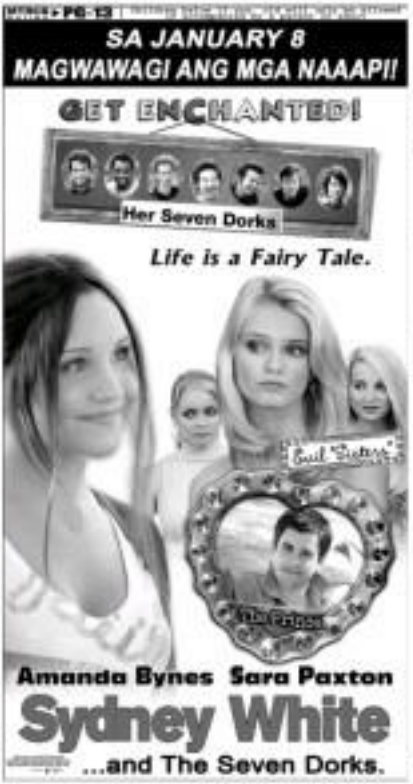
One must realize that to gain a name and respect in Hollywood, you have to earn it. You must be competitive and deserving. There's no such thing as an overnight success.

For me, I'd rather see this young actress' performance up-to-par based on her own sense of judgment. From her interviews, I realized that she's a level-headed woman so I'd like to see her grow naturally (with no pressure) to become a full-blown actress. If Hollywood is meant for her, it's for her.

Great music

From Judy Galacgac@sbcglobal.net):

I would like to thank you for a wonderful article about Taylor Hicks. We were talking about this subject last night as we watched the show gala being televised from NY. After listening to what I would call mine..."rare music," one of my guests said...I thought, what happened to good music? Music that stirs something, sounds that you can hear and just plain great music? Taylor is all that today's music isn't. This article says it all. Rendezvous the author!



CASEY Affleck and Michelle Monaghan in "Gone Baby Gone"

Heartbreakingly powerful

By Oliver M. Fulambarker
Correspondent

WE'RE HOPING THAT THIS FILM GETS A return booking, now that the Metro Manila Film Festival is over.

Hollywood celeb Ben Affleck has had his share of awkward-fitting roles. But whether he's done with acting, as rest movie buffs have been publicly discussing, or that he sees it comfortably in the director's chair.

"Gone Baby Gone," originally a book by Dennis Lehane ("Mystic River"), is a coherent crime thriller that benefits from Affleck's writing skills as screenwriter, he and Aaron Stockard translate a dark tale of loss, moral ambiguity and hard choices with precision.

Subtle, magnetic

Cast in the lead role of Patrick Kenzie is Ben's brother Casey, who has gotten well deserved choice roles lately. In "The Assassination of Jesse James," the younger Affleck effortlessly played a 19-year old who hero-worships the legendary bandit. Here, he plays a 26-year-old private investigator just as subtly and magnetically. He's hired to help find an abducted girl (Madeline O'Brien), which brings him and his partner Angie (Michelle Monaghan) to the seedy sides of Boston and beyond.

Their meanderings in the case is met with hesitation, initially (Morgan Freeman plays the distinguished cop), a far-reaching narrative of a society who understands the tragedy of losing a child.

Ed Harris plays the intimidating detective, another person in the investigation who answers as Patrick's supposed sure engagements and manipulations. With a combination of brilliance and luck, the duo's preemptive takeovers find the secrets along the way, and has to make life-altering decisions he never thought he'd ever face.

"Gone Baby Gone" succeeds in eliciting concern about the fate of the missing child, and that concern grows exponentially when the girl's mother is revealed to be a substance abusing, absentee parent early on. When the problem emerges for the first time, you're already heavily involved with the solving, and the tough, climactic dilemma is going to make you choose sides.

Emotionally layered

Also making the reality of the girl's situation overbearing is the portrayal of the mom, Helene. Played solemnly by Amy Ryan, Helene's apathetic junkie makes it easy to cast blame.

If there's anything about "Gone Baby Gone" that keeps it from being a perfect film, it's the occasional heavy-handed flashbacks, when the camera is focusing on someone for a long time, you just get the idea that he or she isn't telling everything important, and that's being saved for a later reveal. You easily suspect such people, while others are just arrested to serve as obvious red herrings.

Formulaic devices notwithstanding, "Gone Baby Gone" is still emotionally layered and twist-filled. It's expressedly heartbreaking, and a memorably powerful collaboration between the winning cast and the Affleck's.

Life beyond show business

Newton L. Tecson

AMONG HOLLYWOOD CELEBS, Angelina Jolie has set the "no high for celebrities" predicament at movements and campaigns much larger than themselves. Her shining example has prompted other stars to similarly use their celebrity as a potent tool to focus the public's attention on pressing issues that need to be addressed, not just locally but sometimes even globally.

Interestingly, large-born heavy-drinker "rascal" is but even significant other, Brad Pitt. The decidedly popular leading man has dreams to frame an unwilling new home for the victims of typhoon Katrina.

To generate public support for the massive home-building initiative, Pitt has been parading on many TV shows. Speaking on every home example, he has donated millions of his own money to the massive home-building movement. Clearly, this is one star who knows how to walk the talk!

It helps, of course, that megastar has enabled Pitt to become financially independent beyond his boyhood dreams. But there are other stars for richer than he is who have opted to keep their multimillions to themselves, so "image" to him for showing others the better way to go.

Documentary filmmaker

Another star who proves that there is life beyond show business—that time it is more than ever—is Angelina Jolie, leading lady **David Bisbiglia**. Hilarious to many people, Hannah has for the past few years, evolved from one to documentary filmmaker.

Like Pitt, she's chosen to use her celebrity to focus the public's focus on significant issues—but, she's chosen to do so even more directly through the use of low-video camera, to film documentaries about child workers and the trafficking of minors all over the world.

What prompted Hannah to stop acting in front of the movie camera and work behind it? She became more serious about her need to make her work relevant to the world beyond entertainment when she fell in love with John F. Kennedy Jr., before his marriage and tragic death.

Kennedy may no longer be around, but the world view he helped Hannah acquire has guided career choices and other decisions to this day.

Hollywood's Golden Boy

For his part, Robert Redford used to be the Golden Boy of mainstream Hollywood cinema, but drifted his focus via big screen when he became the turning force behind the Sundance Film Institute and Festival, which favor the forwarne and future of alternative cinema.

Before Sundance, many alternative filmmakers and "indies" had a tough time finding financing and good showcases for their movies. Now, they can take advantage of the fact that Sundance has become one of the most influential film festivals in the world.

In addition, it boasts the existence of new filmmakers by conducting workshops and talent searches, providing start-up grants for promising producers, and making sure that its festival is a movers-and-shakers forum for newcomer persons from the very beginning.

For instance, at the peak of his high-flying career, Redford chose to take time off from acting to mentor to direct his first feature, "Ordinary People," in 1980.

The follow-up film, "The 8th Legis Beautiful Way" was even more significant, and his subsequent directorial efforts, "A River Runs Through It" and "Quiz Show," were similarly outstanding.

Possible Best Actor awards...

From page 63

hit in the middle several times." Peck told us in a separate interview. "Spending an hour getting a bending ball thrown at you is frightening. Daniel's character is frightening."

But when Daniel is not inhabiting monstrously evil characters, he is an engaging interview subject. Although he likes to wear regular-guy clothes and sports tattoos, Daniel's artistic interests betrays his pedigree. His father, Cecil Day-Lewis, was the English Poet Laureate from 1968 until his death in 1972. He is married to actress and director Rebecca Miller, daughter of the late great American playwright, Arthur Miller.

It is interesting to watch your character: As he ascends the ladder of success, he descends into isolation. Are there parallels of this in your own life?

It has been suggested a number of times that. I have something of the hermit in me. I certainly don't feel it's true. I just lead a quiet life when I am not working. It's a very positive thing.

Do you think your character was a victim of the forces around him or was it something in his nature?

I certainly think that the way of life that Plainview chose for himself undoubtedly played a part in helping to unleash those forces that were at work within. But having said that, there had to be a seed of self-destruction because when Plainview incontrovertibly separated himself from mankind, he was in essence destroying himself in the same time.

Can you talk about Paul's overall best script?

I have to begin by saying that Paul's script is quite a remarkable piece of writing. It is a nature which isn't the case with everyone in that line of work. It's just because he has a deep love and appreciation of language but because he inhabits the world he is creating as a writer very much the same way performers try to inhabit their world in their work.

I read page 1 first page 2, 3 and 4 and no one has said a single word. Instead, the life of this man was described from moment to moment in beautiful detail. I found that to be incredibly exciting idea—a very long sequence with no dialogue.

What would you like the viewers to glean from this movie?

I don't know if you'll believe this, but it wouldn't seem to me to wish anyone to glean any lesson from the film. The process of making a piece of work of any kind is any creative field is a tremendous leap of faith process. It requires one to be working day by day with a very narrow field of focus on the work itself. Therefore, there would never be any a part of me that was somehow anticipating a future when this piece of work might be offered up for inspection and judgment of any kind.

So for me, it's about moments and moments no when I realize that this film is going to be seen, possibly talked about and judged. It's not really part of my experience of doing the work at all. It comes from a very private and personal need to do that work. There's always great danger in wishing for a conclusion of any kind to be drawn. You set off on the wrong course if you try to work in some way.

He understand Daniel Paul Duncan's view into the role after you have done three weeks of filming with another actor.

That's correct. It was astounding, to the space of a weekend that Paul had to prepare for Eli, he was able to bring everything with him—a recognizable human being who thought, spoke, moved, responded and listened like a fully-formed person which is the most you can ask for from any colleagues. One of Paul's great gifts is that he's not capable of animals. He's the real thing.

When the movie begins, right away the tone is established—it is threatening and intimidating at the same time. Was that sheet done in the beginning?

It was shot at the very beginning. One of the wonderful things about this movie was that Paul organized it so we would shoot in sequence. That was largely made possible because we were working within the self-contained confines of a ranch.

When your character finds out that someone is out after his claims to be, he tells him,

I can't speak for all of you but it's not uncommon in human beings to have unanimous thoughts from time to time (laughter). We do our very best to express them, but none of us would truly know where that line has until we cross it.

Can you share some of your memories of filming "Evenwalk, New Jersey" in Argentina?

We were on a soundstage in Buenos Aires doing one of the first scenes in the film. They built a set—a complete set, a lot of dirt and laundry. They had three huge great wind machines that are like vats, great turbines that could power an electric dam or something. When we began the take, they switched these things on and everything just flew up into the air (laughter). Everyone was running at each other. No one could hear what anyone was saying, plus there were guys holding fire on us on the other side of the camera.

Finally, I just lost it. I said, "Stop. What's going on?" Everyone looked at me like I was insane. They said, "What's the problem?" I said, "I don't know where to begin, but for starters, are these guys hammering them during a take?" They said, "We're not using direct sound on this film." I had pages and pages of dialogue to say my first thought was, "How am I going to post-sync 100 pages of dialogue?" It took only a few nightmarish re-screenings the low re of that. I asked again, "But why are they hammering?" They're not using direct sound so I still had to communicate on what I was doing. They thought that since they're not using direct sound, people can just carry on building the set.

An article about your in-laws came out on Sunday Fair in September last year. What was an interview prompted of you and your family?

I never go into specific details about that but all I can say is that I was utterly disgusted that that article was ever written at all. Disgusted.

I suppose you are a quiet person?

I am a quiet person though you wouldn't guess it during this period because I do nothing but talk (laughter) for weeks. I require a certain kind of solitude in order to do the work. I love it a very quiet place. I couldn't get ready for the work that I do without this.

Have you thought about eventualizing your father's work?

It's funny you actually say that because a new biography was written about my father by a wonderful scholar named Brian Stanford. It's a very honorable, extremely well-informed and...

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